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Makers of the Nineteenth Century

1873

By

Richard A. Armstrong, B.A.

Author of "God and the Soul," "Faith
and Doubt in the Century's Poets," &c.



London
T. Fisher Unwin
Paternoster Square
1901

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PREFACE

THE addresses gathered in this volume are simply pulpit lectures given in the ordinary course of my ministry on Sunday evenings. Their appeal as printed is the same as their appeal as spoken : not to the critic or the widely read, but to the average thoughtful man or woman, and especially the young man or woman, of our time. I therefore do not assume in them that the works of the writers I discuss are familiar to the reader. Doubtless in many cases they are, for there is nothing recondite in these studies. But I have learnt to know that most books have not been read by most men, and that the knowledge conventionally ascribed to "every schoolboy" overlaps the actual knowledge of most of us. Therefore, even in treating those whose names are commonest on our lips, I have told something of what they have said or done, before entering on the criticism thereof.

My principle of selection has been far from scientific. I have spoken and written about such "Nineteenth Century Makers" as have had for me some special interest, either by the influence of their characters or writings on my own thought and life, or by some personal contact. I am not guilty of

PREFACE

thinking that these thirteen have been the supreme "Makers" of our age. Some of them, indeed, would so rank on any principle of computation; but others can advance no such claim. Omissions, too, are accounted for in other ways. I had recently published lectures on Wordsworth and on Browning with other poets; lectures by other preachers on Shelley, Tennyson, and Ruskin, were intercalated with those treated in this book. But a host of others, statesmen, reformers, thinkers, writers, rise up in the imagination claiming foremost rank. Here I have been content to discuss one representative of each of my thirteen types.

The order of presentation is unscientific too. It is simply the order in which it was convenient to prepare the lectures, and, save in the case of the final trio, there is little organic connection between one subject and the next.

I have erased such notes of time and place as could have no significance for the reader. But an utterance on Queen Victoria delivered but five days after her "passing" could not but bear the impression of that sad and solemn moment. And a discourse on James Martineau delivered from the pulpit and in the church which were erected for his ministry could not be stripped of local reference. He was the incumbent of Hope Street Church, Liverpool, from 1849 to 1857.

RICHARD A. ARMSTRONG.

LIVERPOOL,
April, 1901.

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I

*THE PREACHER: THOMAS
CARLYLE*

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CARLYLE*

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*THE PREACHER: THOMAS
CARLYLE*

THE Nineteenth Century of the Christian era has run its course. What has the dead century achieved? What lies hidden in the century that has dawned? They are great questions. The first may be answered in considerable measure. The second can be answered hardly at all.

I propose to consider some things that have been said and done these hundred years in some of the departments of human thought and life. And to each of those departments I would attach some one great representative name, and see what he who bears it has accomplished, what up-lift and on-lift he has given to our common humanity.

And I begin with the Preacher,—the man, that is, who by living word has touched the springs of emotion and of conduct. For of all men I incline to think the great preacher—the man who preaches by heart and soul and life, and not by pen and lip alone—is the very greatest, the one the world has needed and will need most of all that the kingdom of God may come.

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And for Nineteenth Century preacher I might have taken Robertson, of Brighton, the luminous exponent of Christian verities under new aspect and with new meaning ; or Liddon, the golden-mouthed ; or Spurgeon, the mighty hammerer, whose titanic force gave new life to an old and almost dead theology ; or Martineau, who so blended religion and philosophy that it is hard to untwist their strands. But I have taken Thomas Carlyle, who never in all his life stood in any pulpit, who held the priesthood of no Church, who subscribed no Creed ever drawn by the hand of man. And I have chosen him in preference to all the professional preachers, Channing or Newman, Liddon or Spurgeon, because I think that the appeal of his books to the conscience and soul of England exceeded in power and effect—in awakening and revolutionising energy—that of any other preacher of them all.

Every Briton should try to realise the grim, strong, rough-hewn personality of this man, as he looked out from the farmsteads of Ecclefechan and Craigenputtock, or from that quiet little house at Chelsea, on the great seething world with its stupendous problems and its terrific struggles. Says Emerson, who visited him at Craigenputtock : “ I found the house amid desolate heathery hills, where the lonely scholar nourished his mighty heart.” “ He was tall and gaunt, with a cliff-like brow, self-possessed, and holding his extraordinary powers of conversation in easy command, clinging to his northern accent with evident relish ; full of lively anecdote, and with a streaming humour which floated everything he looked upon.” Such was the young man. Yet he

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had marvellous powers of taciturnity as well. And who does not know the portrait when age was creeping on—the shaggy hair unkempt, the head leaning, not a little weary, on the hand, the sad eye outlooking, taking in all things to transmute them in that great brain compacted so nobly, so finely strung?

What was the man's message? What did he preach? Chief of all, surely, that without which no man, no nation, no era can be great—*earnestness, veracity*.

For Carlyle woke upon a time when thought and art and life were shallow. In politics, in religion, in all the supreme concerns of man, formulæ were accepted which were formulæ and little more, unprobed by any; conventions prevailed which had no root in reality; creeds were recited, shibboleths ran current, which were out of relation to any deep-lying and enduring truth; principles there were not, known or proclaimed to men in general, by which to steer a course or frame a purpose. A deep under-current indeed there was, but inarticulate as yet; on the surface of society all was superficial. The philosophy of the Eighteenth century had faded out; the philosophy of the Nineteenth was forging over there in Germany, but as yet found no voice in England. When Carlyle first spoke, the world was mid-way between the reaction from the French Revolution of the 1790's, and the New Revolutionary movements of 1848. What genuine honest belief there was, was for the most part materialistic; the most earnestly propounded maxims of life were utilitarian; God, if believed in at all, was a clever mechanician; and ✓

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not wisdom, or insight, or reflection was preached as the highest intellectual good, but correct information on the surface of nature and of history.

And the great soul of Carlyle burst the bonds ; and his words came like molten fire upon an unbelieving and dilettante age.

Earnestness, Veracity : these were the first and supremest needs. "Sartor Resartus," the great autobiographical self-revelation of Carlyle, throbs with that message from end to end. *Earnestness* : all the conventions of society, the "æsthetic teas" with their pretty compliments and petty gossip, the superficial learning, the little scratchings of the current science on the rock-face of nature, the "clothes" that alone differentiate king from beggar, these are absolutely worthless in the eyes of earnest men. Life is a great, an awful task. It is for men to bring to it all their powers wrought up by utmost striving to highest possible efficiency. And *veracity* : away with the shams ! Let thought be deep and strong. Better doubt and disbelief than to believe a lie. The absolute worth or worthlessness of things, let us know it as it is, and make no pretence, whether to cajole others or to deceive our own selves.

Yes, for most strenuous minds Unbelief must come before Belief, Doubt before Conviction. With Teufelsdröckh at any rate, the figure which Carlyle clothes with his own soul-history, so it was. "Not till after long years and unspeakable agonies did the believing heart surrender." "But through such Purgatory pain, it is appointed us to pass ; first must the dead Letter of Religion own itself dead, and drop piecemeal into dust, if the living Spirit of Religion,

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freed from this its charnel-house, is to arise on us, new-born of Heaven, and with new healing under its wings."

And so I suppose the greatest chapters Carlyle ever wrote are those three in the second book of "Sartor," named "The Everlasting No," "Centre of Indifference," and "The Everlasting Yea." They describe his own soul as the blank unbelief came sailing over him, blotting out, as in a fog, all the traditional religious beliefs which he had learnt at his mother's knee ; and then the reactionary period of indifference to the whole perennial problem ; and then the soft dawning of the brighter day, and the profound conviction of God and Duty and Love and the Eternal Life.

First, the sweeping of unbelief over the eager mind : there is no guide. He stands "shouting question after question in the Sibyl-cave of Destiny, and receiving no answer but an Echo." "It is all a grim Desert, this fair world of his ; wherein is heard only the howling of wild beasts, or the shrieks of despairing, hate-filled men ; and no Pillar of Cloud by day, and no Pillar of Fire by night, any longer guides the Pilgrim."

Yet even so, he knew afterwards that it had all been the leading of God. "Unprofitable servants as we all are," he writes, "perhaps at no era of his life was he more decisively the Servant of Goodness, the Servant of God, than even now when doubting God's existence." Yet awful was the blank. "To me the Universe was all void of Life, of Purpose, of Volition, even of Hostility : it was one huge, dead, immeasurable Steam-engine, rolling on, in its dead

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indifference, to grind me limb from limb. O, the vast, gloomy, solitary Golgotha and Mill of Death !”

But then came a day to Teufelsdröckh—and he surely is but the symbol of Carlyle himself—when walking the hot and steaming streets, suddenly there rose in him a Thought—great, far-reaching, significant. “I asked myself: ‘What art thou afraid of? Wherefore, like a coward, dost thou forever pipe and whimper, and go cowering and trembling? Despicable biped! what is the sum-total of the worst that lies before thee? Death? Well, Death; and say the pangs of Tophet too, and all that the Devil and Man may, will, or can do against thee! Hast thou not a heart; canst thou not suffer whatsoever it be; and as a Child of Freedom, though outcast, trample Tophet itself under thy feet, while it consumes thee? Let it come then; I will meet it, and defy it!’ And as I so thought, there rushed like a stream of fire over my whole soul; and I shook base Fear away from me for ever.”

So he has shaken himself free from old superstitions, affirmations and negations alike. But he has made the great discovery that behind this vast material universe, this grinding steam-engine of forces, there is an unseen world, that the real powers are not in the seen things, which are but clothes, but in the unseen, which are spirit. Laws, Government? Where are they? Not in Downing Street or Palais Bourbon, nor in Papers tied with tape. But “everywhere, nowhere.” Government? “Seen only in its works, this too is a thing aeriform, invisible; or if you will, mystic and miraculous. So spiritual is our whole daily

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life : all that we do springs out of Mystery, Spirit, invisible Force."

Yes, the invisible rules the visible, the spirit of man his body ; it is the will that shapes the world to its purpose. But man : is that all ? This great Universe itself, this grinding steam-engine, this loom with its rattling shuttle ; nay, this great, mysterious outspread heaven, those stars which are strewn through the infinite space : behind them is there no unseen Spirit ? Man made not them, nor guides them. Who breathed them forth ? Who moves them through their orbits ?

His young enthusiasms had been slain in the collapse of all belief, their crop burnt up in the heat of his despair. But there was to be "a second crop." He was presently to "see the perennial greensward, and sit under umbrageous cedars, which defy all Drought (and Doubt)."

He sits one day, in his wanderings, on a high table-land, facing the great mountains. The wondrous unity of Nature possesses him. Nature, so beautiful, majestic, tender, seems to speak, to whisper to him with a strange soothing and uplifting. Nature : "Or"—he cries—"what is nature ? Ha ! why do I not name thee God ? Art not thou 'the Living Garment of God ?' O Heavens, is it in very deed HE, then, that ever speaks through thee ; that lives and loves in thee, that lives and loves in me ?"

"Fore-shadows," he goes on in what must be taken as the supreme classical passage in all the writings of Carlyle, "Fore-shadows, call them rather fore-splendours, of that Truth, and Beginning of Truths, fell mysteriously over my soul. Sweeter

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than Day-spring to the ship-wrecked in Nova Zembla ; ah, like the mother's voice to the little child that strays bewildered, weeping, in unknown tumults ; like soft streamings of celestial music to my too-exasperated heart, came that Evangel. *The Universe is not dead and demoniacal, a charnel-house with spectres ; but godlike and my Father's !*" The Universe not dead or demoniacal—but Godlike and our Father's. Take that to heart as the Supreme Word of this great doubter, questioner, shouter into the Sibyl-cave ; in whom at last, because he was earnest and veracious, and of a great courage and determination, the questioner was merged in the prophet, the doubt transmuted to transcendent conviction.

"Godlike and my Father's." And so, says he, "With other eyes, too, could I now look upon my fellow man : with an infinite Love, with an infinite Pity. Poor wandering, wayward man ! Art thou not tired, and beaten with stripes, even as I am ? Ever, whether thou bear the royal mantle or the beggar's gabardine, art thou not so weary, so heavy-laden ?—and thy Bed of Rest is but a Grave. O my Brother, my Brother, why cannot I shelter thee in my bosom, and wipe away all tears from thy eyes ?"

But immense as is the value of Carlyle's proclamation to the Nineteenth Century of that "Everlasting Yea" which is the one only possible solution of the existence of the universe and the regal power of the mind of man, not less strenuous is his practical message to the men of his time. He saw in the practical life of our race the ceaseless conflict between the iron bonds of necessity in which the world is

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bound, and the free spirit which is our inheritance as sons of God. And he perceived that only in obedience, loyal and unswerving, can our freedom be truly realised. Duty is the key of life. Not what we would are we to do ; but often what we must, and always what we should. "Obedience," so he writes, "is our universal duty and destiny ; wherein whoso will not bend must break : too early and too thoroughly we cannot be trained to know that Would, in this world of ours, is as mere zero to Should, and for most part as the smallest fractions even to Shall." But obedience is a leading, not a slavery. It leaves us free initiative. We can take up our task and throw into it the zeal, the love that burns in us. The spirit of service may always be our guide. Only we must not be idle. We must not merely reflect and feel. Above all things we must *do*. And it is the thing at hand that we are to do. "'Do the duty which lies nearest thee,' which thou knowest to be a duty. Thy second duty will already have become clearer." "The situation that has not its duty, its ideal, was never yet occupied by man. Yes, here, in this poor, miserable, hampered, despicable Actual, wherein thou even now standest, here or nowhere is thy Ideal ! Work it out therefrom ; and working, believe, live, be free." And closely connected with this call to Duty (this small imperative syllable "Do," with its boundless wealth of meaning) is the warning of the misery and futility involved in the life-method of such as make their own happiness their highest end, who let the desire thereof overgrow the heart. In work there is indeed nothing for a brave man to complain of. "Who,"

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he demands, "art thou that complainest of thy life of toil? Complain not. Look up, my wearied brother; see thy fellow-workmen there in God's eternity; surviving there, they alone surviving; sacred band of the Immortals, celestial bodyguard of the empire of mankind." There is a satisfaction higher, sweeter, holier than happiness. "There is in man a higher than love of happiness: he can do without happiness, and instead thereof find blessedness." "Man's Unhappiness, as I construe," says Teufelsdröckh, "comes of his Greatness; it is because there is an Infinite in him, which with all his cunning he cannot quite bury under the finite." "Will the whole Finance Ministers and Upholsterers and Confectioners of modern Europe undertake, in joint-stock company, to make one Shoe-black HAPPY?" "Pitifullest Whipster," he styles the man who thinks the universe should so be made that he, the pitifullest whipster, shall be happy. And he recalls the story of the ghost for ever croaking, "Once I was hap, hap, happy, but now I'm *meeserable*," which ghost turned out to be a rusty meat-jack.

And so the preacher preached. Mostly I have sought his sermon in that immortal "Sartor Resartus" which with so great difficulty found its way into a monthly magazine. But "Past and Present," "Latter Day Pamphlets," and all the rest preach perpetually the same twofold Gospel of God behind the Universe, and Duty as man's behest. The Heroes of his Hero-worship are heroes for their doing. To strip the calumnies from the name of Cromwell, and set him forth the greatest and grandest of English rulers, was grateful to him because Cromwell was a strong

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man who believed in God and did great doing. Indeed his admiration for the strength which works, which achieves, which does, was so great that it sometimes blinded him to the faults of men. It set him defending Governor Eyre, of Jamaica. It moulds many a paragraph in the "French Revolution" and in "Frederick the Great." And we have to remind ourselves sometimes that even most strenuous doing is not glorious unless it be inspired by some great Ideal lighting up the soul—love of God, or truth, or man.

What, then, was the total effect of this first "Maker of the Century" whom we have called to witness? How much did he affect his time? He opened his eyes on the world in 1795. He only lay down to die in that modest Chelsea house in 1881. He was the victim of cruel dyspepsia, and often his temper was sardonic, and the stranger who approached him was rebuffed, while the wife found matrimony no bed of roses. But always within burnt the fire of his message to the world. What is the sum of it and how much has he effected?

He found the world, as we saw, very full of shams and given over to convention. Men were only scratching at the surface for the diamond of truth. No man dug deep. Sincere religion there was not very much; and care for the masses of men burnt only in a few generous bosoms. But I think through the middle section of the century, the 40's, the 50's, the 60's, there was a deepening earnestness slowly penetrating through English society, and a stronger craving for veracity. It showed itself in many ways. It worked in some directions for which Carlyle but

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little cared. It produced a searching criticism of the Bible records ; it led to great and far-reaching theological reconstructions ; it touched with an Ithuriel spear the philosophy of the age and set it trying to be more spiritual ; it deepened the awe of scientific men before the mysteries which every fresh discovery revealed ; above all, it wakened the temper of philanthropy and reform, and left its mark upon the statute-book in great measures associated with the names of Bright and of Gladstone. With many of these modes of earnestness, I say, Carlyle had but scanty sympathy. But I think it was largely his spirit, the quickening due to his molten word, that moved the men and the masses who brought these things about.

We seem to-day to have fallen on a season of slackened earnestness, a season in which men like a flattering lie better than an unpleasant truth, a time of the reviving of tinsel ideals, love of gold or of ease or of military glitter ; a time when the cry for reform is hushed ; and the selfishness of classes or individuals once more erects its head as a master-force. The voice of Carlyle grows faint. The young men no longer turn to him as guide and leader, teacher and prophet. The old men have laid his volumes aside upon the shelf. But for this generation, as for that of our fathers, he has a message of flame, would men but listen to his word. And we shall not recover from our paralysis till earnestness like his, veracity like his, high faith like his, and the great doctrine of the holiness of duty once more have sway with statesmen and with people.

II

THE MAN OF SCIENCE: CHARLES DARWIN

II

THE MAN OF SCIENCE: CHARLES DARWIN

IF the Preacher has greatly influenced the hearts and consciences of men in the nineteenth century, the Man of Science has enormously influenced not only the machinery of practical life, but the fundamental thought of men on the nature and history of the universe and its denizens. It is in the latter branch of his influence that I propose to consider the man of science. And so I take, by way of illustration, not an Edison, who, with his *confrères*, has transformed the streets of our cities, giving us electricity for our slave, but a Darwin who has taught us to think new thoughts concerning the making of the world.

Even for this, indeed, I might have made a choice among other names: Helmholtz or Haeckel in Germany, Lyell, Tyndall, or Huxley in England, and many another; for the outburst of scientific genius has been, I suppose, by far the most marked intellectual feature of our century. But there is not one of the great masters of science of the century who would not acclaim the transcendent pre-

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dominance of Charles Darwin, both for the extraordinary care and patience of his investigations and for the stupendous effect of his conclusions on human thought.

Darwin was born in that great year, 1809, which gave us also Tennyson, Gladstone, and Mendelssohn. Seeing the supreme idea with which his fame is connected, it is profoundly interesting to note that his grandfather, Erasmus, who died seven years before he was born, and was more distinguished as a poet than as a man of science, nevertheless wrote these pregnant words: "Would it be too bold to imagine that all warm-blooded animals have arisen from one living filament, which the Great First Cause endowed with animality, . . . possessing the faculty of continuing to improve by its own inherent activity, and of delivering down these improvements by generation to its posterity, world without end?"

The grandson was born in 1809. It was not till he had lived just half a century that the famous work appeared which has placed him at the head of all the scientific men of his age, and given him an influence on human thought not surpassed in range and depth by a dozen men in the whole history of the world.

In Sefton Park, Liverpool, is a ring of most remarkable statues by M. Chavalliaud, surrounding the great palm-house. You will find among these the marble figure of an old man clad in a short, loose cloak, with a stout staff in one hand and a flower, which he is closely examining, in the other. The rough exterior of the man is reproduced with extreme fidelity—the careless dress, the face with no

CHARLES DARWIN

comeliness of feature, the long tangled beard, the extraordinary beetling shaggy brows, the great forehead and splendid dome of head. It is the counterfeit presentment of Charles Darwin. I know not how far Liverpool is appreciatively aware of the treasure it possesses; but of this statue and the companion one of Linnæus, young, buoyant, beautiful, any city in the world might well be proud.

I think you will read there something of the exceeding modesty of the mighty naturalist. At fifty years of age he had for nearly half his lifetime been pondering the most crucial problem that in those days faced biologists—the origin of species. Animal and vegetable tribes had long been grouped in genera and species, each species marked by its own proper characteristics. All the world had assumed that each species had been created perfect at the first, and had its exclusive line of descent from its own particular parent. There were indeed those, Lamarck most prominent among them, who had said that many species blended in a common ancestry. But such speculation remained little better than a guess, for no explanation save the wildest had ever been attempted of how one species could become progenitor to another. And orthodox science held firm by the conviction that every species was a separate creation set down upon the earth at a particular date by the sudden act of God. That view seemed to rest on unchallengeable authority in the statement of Genesis that each brute and bird and fish and creeping thing was created after its kind. But from the time of his

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voyage in southern seas in the early thirties, on through the increasing years of his manhood, Darwin had been laboriously observing, collecting, and registering facts, till by an overwhelming mass of evidence and an overwhelming force of reasoning, he had reached the conclusion that the species of all living things have been gradually modified and spread out into their infinite variety; and there had shone in upon him the exquisite and beautiful explanation of how by sure and natural processes, still active in our midst, this immense development had come about.

But firm and lucid as the demonstration was in the mind of the master himself, so profound and ingrained was his modesty, that he displayed the utmost diffidence in sending his book to brother naturalists. After his name and fame were world-wide, he thus estimated his own success: "With such moderate abilities," he wrote, "as I possess, it is truly surprising that I should have influenced to a considerable extent the belief of scientific men on some important points." Compare that with Huxley's deliberate verdict on the book. "The most potent instrument," wrote that great warrior of science, "for the extension of the realm of natural knowledge, which has come into men's hands since the publication of Newton's '*Principia*,' is Darwin's '*Origin of Species*.'"

What, then, was this "potent instrument" that issued from the snug and modest country-house at Down? To his close friend Hooker—the custodian of Kew—he had long ago confided that to tell this new scientific thought that was in him was "like

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confessing a murder." It was indeed a stupendous heresy, and made such a stir in the European world as perhaps no other intellectual utterance has made since the Protestant Reformation. The way was first prepared by such questions in his mind as how the woodpecker came by beak and tongue and claws to be so perfectly adapted to tap the tree and extract the insect for his food ; or how the tree-frog became adapted to climb trees ; or how a seed came to be furnished with hooks or plumes to aid in its dispersal. Of course you might say, "God made them so, and there is an end." But there was that in the atmosphere of the time that made it difficult for a mind like Darwin's to be quite content with such a so-called explanation. And presently Lyell—a very kindred spirit—showed how vast was the mistake of those who taught that the changes in the earth's crust had been made by sudden miraculous intervention at successive eras ; how rather mountain and valley, granite and flint, owed their formation to the steady operation of the very same physical forces that play on the world to-day ; and so the suggestion was in the air that the successive and varied species of living things, these also, owed their origin, not to sudden unprelaced fiat of the divine will, but rather to some play of forces still active in our midst which it needed only a sufficiently keen vision to detect. What, then, could that play of forces be ? The answer to that question—to which hitherto no man had found a clue—was the supreme achievement of the man of Beckenham. The answer to that question is now known to all the world as "Darwinism."

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The young naturalist first cast his eyes upon certain operations of the breeder and the gardener. "I soon perceived," says he, "that **SELECTION** was the keystone of *man's* success in making useful races of animals and plants." Horses, cattle, poultry, pigeons, fruit, and flowers had actually been changed, species with quite new characteristics developed, created, under the hand of man. How did he do it? By taking advantage of slight variations in individuals, selecting the individuals having in some faint measure the characteristics he desired, and providing that these should be propagated while those not having such characteristics were suffered to die out, the breeder or gardener gradually produced a race differing so widely from the original type as practically to constitute a quite new species.

So with *artificial* selection : yes. But this was ruled by the selective will of man. Could there be any *natural* selection, any selection working by natural law quite independently of human will, throughout the wide area of living things, which would produce the like results? What undetected force was there in the natural world parallel in effect to the will of man in the farmyard and the garden?

While this problem was floating in his mind the young investigator read a book very famous in its day, "Malthus on Population." The teachings of that book are largely exploded now. Wise men know that the curse of our civilisation is not that there are too many people in the world, but the selfishness of the rich and the improvidence of the

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poor ; the seizure of the land by the few, the exclusion from its use of the many. But Malthus talked of "the struggle for existence" in the human race, showed how the strong prevailed and the weak went to the wall, and those who had not wit or might to secure them bread died in the dread competition. And that hint was enough for Darwin. There was clearly a struggle for existence in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, since the unchecked increase of many an individual tribe would in itself in a few short years be enough to overwhelm the world. Multitudes must die leaving no progeny behind them. The world and the future, in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, were to the comparatively few. What then determined the conquerors ? By what virtue did the survivors survive ? What was the fundamental condition of the internecine struggle ? Why, obviously, in the slight variations of individuals from one generation to another, some would be better adapted to the surrounding conditions than others, and these would tend to survive, the others to die out. Here the modification of a claw, there that of a beak, here the thickening of the hide, there the increased length of leg, would tend, even if ever so little, to the preservation of life. The favoured individuals would survive and propagate their kind. In the new generation some would carry the new variation to a higher and more effective degree. These again would be the more probable survivors, while their brethren would go under. And so by very, very slow degrees, but by a method very sure, and through forces absolutely natural and normal, new

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species would come about adapted to their environment, while those individuals not so adapted would go under, and their kind would vanish from the face of the earth.

✓ That was the doctrine of the "Origin of Species." As in *artificial* selection man chooses out the variations he desires, and intensifies these by breeding, so in *natural* selection, in the great sweep of creation over the area of the earth and through the ages, the external conditions of climate, habitat, food, and a hundred other elements of the environment, select the variations which they render favourable and cause these to be intensified from generation to generation till a new species, perfectly adapted to its circumstances, lives and thrives and multiplies. "The suggestion," says Huxley, "that new species may result from the selective action of external conditions upon the variations from their specific type which individuals present—and which we call 'spontaneous' because we are ignorant of their causation . . . is the central idea of the 'Origin of Species,' and contains the quintessence of Darwinism."

"The Origin of Species" appeared in 1859. To the few select spirits—men like Hooker, Huxley, Lyell—and to a very few also of the religious thinkers, it came as a revelation. It was the key that had long been wanted—one more great step—nay, the greatest step—in the unfolding of the orderliness of the universe and the perfection of the laws on which it hangs. But from the ordinary critic and the so-called religious world it evoked a tempest of ridicule, a hurricane of contumely and

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abuse. For it seemed to upset the very foundations of religion.

"The Origin of Species" dealt with the problem of the mutability of *species* only. It did not ascend to genera, to families, to kingdoms. But in its final paragraph it did make what were to the orthodox ominous suggestions. "There is grandeur," says Darwin in the closing sentence, "in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one." And just before, he has said of researches such as the book is based on, that by them "much light will be thrown on the origin of man and his history." That is all he said at the time; for he would be reticent till he had fully made out his case. But twelve years afterwards he published to the world "The Descent of Man," therein arguing with extraordinary wealth of marshalled facts that even regal man himself, with all the kingdoms of living things, must trace his ancestry, through the long chain of natural selection, to some primordial forms of life emerging from the inorganic world back in the dim recesses of unrecorded time.

It had been seen so plainly that that would be the ultimate goal of the argument, that "The Descent of Man" in 1871 did not rouse so tremendous a storm as had raged over "The Origin of Species" a decade early. But we must take the whole vast argument together, this great and revolutionary heresy which has been so potent in the making of the thought, the science, the philosophy of the century now locked up with its predecessors in the cabinet of the past.

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How on the whole stands this Darwinism, in its integrity, related to the teachings of the orthodox Christian Church, Catholic or Protestant, Nonconformist or Conformist?

That orthodox Christian Church rests on the assumption that the one authoritative account of the origin of the world—of plants, of animals, of men—is given once for all in the opening paragraphs of the Book of Genesis. That is the foundation. All the vast structure of orthodox religion is built up on that basis. Take it away, and the whole structure totters. All its walls are shaken. All its parts lose their sure cohesion; and the Church is confronted with the tremendous task of building up a new cosmogony, a new theory of the make of the universe in which we live. The Copernican system of astronomy had long ago dealt a like blow at the credit of received theology. The geology of Lyell, a few years before the utterance of Darwin, had dealt another. But the blow which Darwinism dealt was felt far more keenly, far more widely. It seemed to discredit Church and Bible, nay, to do away with the Living God himself. And the resistance offered to the new teaching was strenuous, determined, in many bewildered minds most honest and most earnest, in many others unscrupulous and bigoted to the last degree. But great is truth, and she will prevail; and the last forty years have seen the essential elements of Darwinism accepted by all educated men. The great revolution has been accomplished, and orthodox theology is left to shift for itself as best it may.

That is the relation of Darwinism to orthodox

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theology. But ~~the~~ relation of Darwinism to pure religion, what is that? Why, we are beginning to see that it is a relation of no hostility whatever; at worst a relation of indifference, not touching it at all; at best the relation of a true ally and friend, making more glorious and wonderful the revelation of the Living God.

At worst, I say, a relation of indifference, not touching pure religion at all. Even Huxley, the eloquent champion of Agnosticism, the very inventor of the term, declares that the doctrine of Darwin leaves the doctrine of Theism, the doctrine of a Supreme God, quite unaffected. It would only show, if there be a God, that his way of working is other than men thought; that his creative wisdom has so constituted the world that no new decree was needed to set the higher plants, the nobler animals, great Man himself upon the earth; but that by the orderly working ordained of Him species has grown from species, genus from genus, kingdom from kingdom, till the oak and the ash, the lily and the rose, the lion and the elephant, the lovely butterfly and the busy bee, a myriad other orders of separate being and all the diverse races of mankind, dwell in the world as in a garden, and all the earth is musical with the hum and roar of infinitely varied life.

And indeed Darwinism, which is but a part of the great doctrine of Evolution, makes for us who believe in God the majestic reign of his providence more wonderful and beautiful than the mind of man had before conceived. How solemn, how magnificent is that procession which the new philosophy

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opens out ! From the primitive world-dust which is the furthest back that the human mind has as yet conceived, on through the gradual forming of suns and planets, worlds and systems, to the upspringing of primeval life all round this globe of ours and doubtless millions more ; then life itself struggling on and up, through ever nobler forms touched to finer issues, on and on to rational man himself, first rudely reasoning in matted jungle and hollow cave, on and ever up to civilised communities, ordered tribes and nations, and on and up through the forces working in individual hearts and brains to a Plato, to a Paul, to a Shakespeare, to a Carlyle, to a Darwin, to a Gladstone. Marvellous foresight and design of God ! Marvellous and unswerving execution through the endless ages ! If thus far the progress has been made from such beginnings, to what shall our human kind, the last and highest product of the evolution, attain in ages yet unborn ? How shall our progeny at last reach up and on till the earth be peopled with men of heart and intellect and power akin to the very angels of God !

If you ask Darwin's own position with regard to these transcendent themes, he would reply, "I am but a man of science of moderate ability, with little power of abstract thought. I only contribute certain facts and try to show how life has developed on the earth. Concerning God, I affirm not ; I deny not. Take my facts and weld them as you will in the structure of your spiritual philosophy." I myself had a letter from him long ago in which he said that he had never been able to arrive at a full conviction of the reality of a personal God. Years

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after, in his *Life and Letters*, appeared notes and memoranda in which he made the same confession. But he intimated, and not without some sadness, that so immersed had his mind been in scientific observation, that the capacity of his early manhood to be moved by music and by poetry had failed him, and that sublime scenery had lost its power to make him conscious of a presence Divine breathing through wood and glade. But all those higher experiences of the soul he treated with respect ; and he never uttered or wrote one word which, legitimately understood, tends to subversion of our faith in Him who weaves the ages as a work upon the loom.

Only he cleared religion of cant. He forced it back on its true foundations in the spiritual nature of man. He pushed miracle out of the circle of religion. He dealt a deathblow at ancient superstitions ; and he cleared the air for nobler and purer forms of faith in the twentieth Christian century than any to which the churches of the Christian world have as yet attained.

III

*THE STATESMAN: WILLIAM
EWART GLADSTONE*

III

THE STATESMAN : WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE

AMONG the makers of the life and character of the nineteenth century, we have already dealt with the Preacher and the Man of Science. We are now to consider the Statesman ; and whatever our particular opinions, we could hardly set up any other as type of the statesman at his best and noblest than the great man who closed his eyes at Hawarden in the spring of 1898.

There are two main channels through which the statesman acts upon the world. He legislates, and he administers. Law and administration, these between them touch the life of every man among us at many points. It is true we may rarely come into direct and sensible touch with either of them. But they are there, the framework of our citizenship, controlling, restraining, directing at every turn, developing our liberties or curtailing our freedom, determining the conditions of life's battle for us from day to day and from year to year.

And so it is easy to depreciate the influence of the politician and to affect to be superior to politics. It is easy to say that the people make the politicians

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rather than the politicians the people ; and it is largely true. Nevertheless, a great political individuality exercises for good or evil an influence deep and far-reaching which it is impossible for one who would discriminate and sum up the social forces acting on his time to neglect or to ignore.

The statesman exercises an influence both direct and indirect on countless multitudes of his fellow-men. He wields an influence *direct* through the laws he passes or repeals, the wars he makes or the peace which he consolidates, the purity or the laxity which, taking its rise in him, flows through all the varied channels of the public service. He wields an influence *indirect*, sometimes still more momentous, through the personal character and temper, which, moving on so conspicuous a stage, he impresses on the public mind. The great patriotic statesman who loves the good name of his country more than its military glory, who stands above all things for justice and for human freedom, who respects the rights of others, and would make his nation a shield to the weak, a menace to the lustful strong, who can be tempted neither by pelf nor place nor love of power nor love of ease to swerve from the noblest policy, strengthens indefinitely the moral fibre of his people, and by the sheer force of his personality makes for truth and righteousness over the whole area of our race. The statesman, on the other hand, whose highest ideal of greatness for his nation is either military conquest or the multiplication of markets, or who is mainly moved by personal ambition or party spleen, or is of unscrupu-

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lous, overbearing, and tyrannical temper, a braggart and a bully, is nothing less than a national corrupter, a destroyer of ideals, a degrader of the whole sphere of public life.

There is no line of life which a man may take up which has not its own special and sore temptations—temptations to which the weak or unprincipled will surely yield. But I suppose there are few lines of life so strewn with such temptations as that of the politician. Even the good man will meet many a subtle solicitation. It will so often seem that that which he honestly believes to be good can best be brought to pass by a little compromise with truth, with integrity, with a white and stainless honour, to say nothing of the grosser temptations which at every turn assail the ambitious, the lovers of place or power. And so the sad fact comes about that many are sceptical about any honest or disinterested service in the political world ; and include the whole of that which should be the noblest of all modes of activity in one sweeping condemnation, totally disbelieving that Liberal or Tory, Minister or Opposition, ever acts on the higher plane of motive and of conduct.

Such condemnation, thank God ! is wholly unwarranted by fact. We all know politicians both in and out of Parliament, as we all know physicians and all know lawyers and all know merchants, who are the very soul of honour and high-minded service. In every honourable calling there are men who rise above its temptations. Nevertheless, I fear it remains true that of statesmen of the first rank in the past century there are very few of

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whom we can say with absolute conviction that, whether right or wrong in policy, they consistently acted on the highest principle and were true through life to their own moral ideal. I will name in England Sir Robert Peel, Richard Cobden, John Bright, Sir Stafford Northcote, Gladstone, and John Morley. How many more can you add to the list?

Perhaps the most impressive event in English history during the nineteenth century was the illness, death, and obsequies of William Ewart Gladstone in the May of its antepenultimate year. Recall the emotion which swept with resistless power through all ranks of men amongst us.

The ten days from May 19 to May 29, 1898, remain for ever memorable beyond compare. The morning papers of the 19th left the press before the last breath had been drawn, and they could only announce that the end was a matter but of hours or of minutes. But the newspapers of the 20th—of whatever party or clique—were one chorus of something too grave, too sorrowful, too deeply moved to be called praise. Newspaper men had forgotten their mannerisms. Lofty editorialism gave way to the simple utterances of living men in the distress of a great sorrow and the unstudied eloquence of a profound emotion. Nothing ever before passed over the newspaper press of England like that dying breath from Hawarden. It was not only that for a moment party strife was hushed: it would give but a false impression—seeing what the average sermon is—to say that leading articles were sermons. They were almost prayers. Men wrote as though hitherto their eyes had been holden, and

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now they saw a great light. The voice of the Press—though mostly issuing from “men of the world” or conventionalised politicians—was a sort of long-drawn sigh after a purer and nobler life, an involuntary cry of recognition at a new revelation. The veil between was taken away ; and at that hour the Press of England spoke with the tongue of the evangelist or the prophet.

And when on the Thursday night, and again on the Friday, the moment came for colleagues and for rivals to speak their word in the Parliament of England, a great sincerity broke down the bars of the Parliamentary manner, and trembling tongues and broken voices gave utterance to the overwhelming emotions of the hour. Not only did old lieutenants of the dead chief with faltering cadence bear their testimony before a listening nation ; but men who in the zest of battle or the tourney of debate had had no words too hard, no barbs too sharp, no gibes too biting for their use, now spoke as though moved by a spirit that held them in its sway, and confessed their littleness in the memory of his surpassing greatness. The solemn awe of nearness to holy things filled the benches thronged with the Empire’s law-makers, while even the formal announcements from the chair took a strange, hushed tone unlike aught that Parliament had ever heard before.

But it was neither the Press nor the Legislature that gave the most impressive testimony to the feelings of the people. It was the people themselves who bore that testimony. English history has never yielded the like ten days to those. First,

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every eye and ear was strained to catch some glimpse or echo of the mourning at Hawarden Castle. Then with a great sigh of relief the nation learnt that the family had acceded to the prayer that the burial should be the nation's charge and should take place in Westminster Abbey, the only stipulations being severe simplicity and room for the remains of the wife beside those of her husband in that sacred shrine, when her time should come. Then followed the solemn stages of the ceremonial—the lying of the mortal clay in “the Temple of Peace,” a chamber of the Castle, and subsequently in the little village church, the pilgrimage of thousands to the spot, the proposal—necessarily refused—that relays of men should carry the coffin all the two hundred miles to London, the actual journey by special train, the deposition of the precious burden for two days and nights in the venerable and time-seamed Hall of William Rufus, severed but by a corridor and a flight of steps from the scene of the great orator's most splendid triumphs ; the slow, sorrowful procession of hundreds of thousands of men and women, through two whole days, without pause, without noise, without a moment's breach of the grave decorum, past the plain and simple coffin, peer and artisan mingling in one common stream of mourning ; and the long night watches, with a few candles sending their dim beams up to the rafters of the ancient hall. Then at last the funeral itself—princes and ministers for pall-bearers, all that was great and famous in England assembled in the Abbey, the venerable widow with bowed head in the awful sanctity of

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her grief, scions of the blood royal and statesmen doing her homage after the last *Amen*.

At the same hour all over England, in cathedrals, in humble parish churches, in great public halls, memorial services were being held, the same hymns sung, the same noble Scriptures read as around the open grave into which the mortal clay of the nation's greatest son was lowered. Those days were a national baptism not to be forgotten ; and they taught not a few of us, who had sometimes well-nigh despaired of the public conscience of this people, that then at least the heart of England was still sound at core and that God and righteousness were not forgotten.

I go back on the path of memory a few months further. I recall the scene in the early autumn of 1896, when Gladstone made, at Hengler's Circus, Liverpool, the last of his great orations. See the old man with slow and dragging steps advancing from the door behind the platform to his seat before that sea of eager faces. The figure is shrunken. The eyelids droop. The cheeks are as parchment. Now that he sits, his hands lean heavily upon his staff. We think, "Ah ! it is too late ; the fire has flickered out ; the speech will be but the dead echo of bygone glories." But lo ! he rises. The colour mantles to his face. He stands erect, alert. The great eyes open full upon his countrymen. Yes, the first notes are somewhat feeble, somewhat painful ; but a few minutes pass, and the noble voice falls as the solemn music of an organ on the throng. The eloquent arms seem to weave a mystic garment for his oratory. The

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involved sentences unfold themselves with a perfect lucidity. The whole man dilates. The soul breaks out through the marvellous lips. Age? Not so: this is eternal youth. He is pleading for mercy to an outraged people, for fidelity to a national obligation, for courage and for conscience in a tremendous crisis. And the words from the Revised Version of the Psalms seem to print themselves on the listener's heart: "Thou hast made him but little lower than God, and crownest him with glory and honour."

Truly when that mighty statesman passed away none would have denied him the foremost place among the "Makers of the Nineteenth Century"—at any rate for us Englishmen. Yet what did it amount to? True, for those ten days a great reverence rested on the hearts of the British people. What has it left behind? The temper we all so profoundly admired, have we kept it alive? The high and holy purposes of policy, whether sought by wise or unwise ways, have we retained them in the forefront of our minds? The noble ideal of an England, the friend of the weak, the restrainer of the strong, an England great and glorious, not by wars which crush the people, but by generosity, magnanimity, justice, freedom, does it still shine forth from our hearts? Hardly had that venerable dust been laid in the vault of the historic Abbey when the wrangling of politicians again began, the policy and character of the mighty dead were again assailed, the chivalric temper lost, the noble purposes betrayed, the high ideal forgotten or depreciated, not only by the recognised

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opponents of the great dead chief, but by many a politician and large sections of the people who still professed themselves his followers.

Yes, it seems a melancholy and pathetic tale. When but two years were gone, so little left of his brave and chivalric spirit. False ideals, false glory, false patriotism, false purposes in place of all he taught. A nation feasting on military glory, with deaf ears for the pleadings of its foe, and every shade of contumely and abuse for those who would plead that both sides be heard and the scales held evenly. Willingness to believe any slander against the people we are fighting. Unwillingness to hear any criticism of ourselves. Obedience to the great command of Christ to love our enemies, denounced as treason to the State. The spirit of Gladstone to all seeming dead as his mortal dust, trampled, crushed, destroyed, forgotten.

Are we then to say that the great and good have no effect on after times? Can an impression such as that which Gladstone made indeed perish utterly in a few short months? God forbid! If that were so, then indeed were the building up of civilisation, the bringing in of the kingdom of God, a rolling of the stone of Sisyphus for ever up the hill only to tumble to its base before it reach the top. The influence of our great Englishman to the superficial glance *seems* gone; but deep down in the hearts of tens of thousands of our countrymen, depend on it, stirs at this moment a great yearning for his spirit in the arena of the politician and the statesman. It is not dead in England, that pure spirit, with its love of truth and freedom and justice and peace

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and brotherhood, its hate of braggadocio and greed and cruelty and fraud and the reckless beating of the war-drum. It is not dead. Perhaps for a little while it has been asleep. But be very sure it is waking and will awake. We protest indeed against government by the dead hand. But the living spirit, the vital memory of William Gladstone will be potent for good in the public life of England in the twentieth Christian century.

But I shall be told that after all Gladstone was a party man, and that it behoves a true patriot and Christian to rise above party. And a party man Gladstone was indeed—in early life “the hope of the stern, unbending Tories,” in the great and fruitful years of his highest fame captain and leader of the Liberals. Was that a shame to him? Is it a reproach? It all depends on how he conceived of party. If party be but an organisation of persons desiring the interests of themselves and their associates, if it be a mere side in the game for power, then it is a shame for any lover of the true and of the good to bind himself up with the fortunes of this party or of that. But wherever there is a sound and wholesome political life, there party is but the association of men together for the promotion of some principle which to them seems fraught with beneficent results for the nation which they serve. In one form or another the two great historic parties of England, Tory and Whig, or Conservative and Liberal, stand for two great principles the play of which one against the other makes the life and evolution of society. The one principle is the holding by the old, by existing

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privileges and castes and interests, lest their upsetting should bring disaster in its wake. The other principle is the pressure for reform, for the remoulding of institutions to meet the newer needs of the newer time, for the enfranchising of the oppressed, for the wider distribution of all that makes life worth living. There have been men in either party who have been false to the principle for which it stood. But in either party there have been men to whom its principle seemed a sacred thing, its ideal a purpose to which all strength and gifts and talents might well be consecrated. And to such men it is no reproach—it is a glory—that they are party men. We are often exhorted to rise above party; but such exhortation is not seldom foolish and fatuous as any behest can be. For my part, I am a party man. But that does not mean that I would sacrifice principle to get a particular set of politicians into power; but that the true and historic ideal of one of the great parties in the State seems to me so noble, so beneficent, so fraught with the public good, that I would willingly give my life to hold my party faithful to it and to make its purposes prevail in the counsels of the nation.

It is in that sense that Gladstone was a party man. Again and again with reverberant voice he called his party to be faithful to its principle, to have faith in its ideal. Sometimes he led them to splendid victory. Sometimes he called in vain. But once he had laid hold of the principle at stake, he was true to it through good and ill report, and so far as he was a moulder of party, he moulded it

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solely for an instrument for promoting those great ends of justice, freedom, brotherhood, which were the breath of his nostrils, the meat of his soul, in the civic life of his people.

And so it is not for the opinions of Gladstone that I plead here. I am far from thinking that he was always right. In my little sphere and my humble way I have opposed him more than once. It is not for his opinions, but for his spirit that I call—that pure and fearless spirit which never lost sight of its ideal nor faith in its realisation, nor resolve to stand by it and fight for it and spend and be spent in its behalf. He is the rebuke to timorous men, the rebuke to half-hearted men, the rebuke to self-seeking men, the rebuke to men whose hearts beat with no generous patriotism. He stands the nineteenth century signal-post pointing to chivalry in politics, to pure and high ideals in the craft of statesmanship.

And if you ask me how this man came to be so steadfast in his grand integrity, so consecrated to high and noble purposes, how it was that the common intrigues of politics passed him by unscathed, I answer that it was because there was that in him which lay yet deeper than his political opinions, a thousand times deeper than his political ambitions. And that was his religion.

Here was a man of genius magnificent, of purpose indomitable, of strength well-nigh unmatched in the great arena of political conflict ; and at his heart lay the religion of a little child. He believed in God, in Christ, in prayer, in goodness with all his heart and soul and mind and strength. No pressure of

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the world's affairs ever cancelled the hour of still communion with his God. The form of his faith was far other indeed than mine. It is one of history's bewilderments that he, the mighty emancipator, was a sacerdotalist, that he, the brilliant scholar, was a biblical literalist. The liberal movement in theology never touched him. But the religion was there, deep, vital, the most intimate to him of all concerns. He loved God ; his manhood bowed in profoundest reverence before the Christ ; the law of Christianity he carried as norm and rule into every affair. The doctrine that the Sermon on the Mount cannot be applied to politics, pronounced by bishops, was to him abhorrent. This was God's world. All men were brethren of Him of Nazareth. The Gospel was for all time and place. It was the root of his politics. It gave all its interest and worth to public life. His statesmanship was based on it. And so while other men were swayed by every wind and wave of politics, he stood steadfast as a rock though the tempest howled around him and the billows beat upon his front.

And so it was that he towered above all statesmen of his time. So it was that there was a Titan's power in his speech. So it was that his deeds were pure. So it was that, when they stood in the palace of truth the day after his passing on, even his bitterest foes confessed that on his repute there could lie no stain. So it is that his influence lies deep down to-day in the hearts of our best and truest. So it is that that it will stretch far into future ages. So it is that I adjure all the young who have the making of the coming century in

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their hands to rise to the height of his spirit, to learn of him to practise a citizenship pure, patriotic, unselfish, steadfast, consecrated, fraught with the temper of Christ and the love of the great brotherhood of man.

IV

THE NOVELIST: GEORGE ELIOT



IV

THE NOVELIST: GEORGE ELIOT

TO some it will undoubtedly seem strange that a preacher should include the Novelist among the "Makers of the Century," among the large and serious human influences that played their part in shaping thought and sentiment and character and life in the nineteenth Christian century and helped to make it that which it actually was at the moment of its close. And yet, if we except newspapers, more time has been spent by more men and women, at any rate in our generation, in reading novels than in reading any other kind of literary composition. Every librarian will tell us that the demand for novels exceeds the demand for books of any other sort. Commercially, novels are the only species of literature that brings solid returns not only to the first-class hands, but to the second and third-class hands as well ; the only species save only, strangely enough, sermons. And as a pecuniary speculation the novel far excels the sermon. Its readers are counted by myriads. It is read rapidly, voraciously. There are tens of thousands, especially among the young, who look to it as their chief, if not their

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only recreation. It is obvious, then, that the intellectual and moral character of the novel is of vast, of immeasurable importance to our civilisation. For good or for evil it is perpetually, and on an enormous scale, shaping the character of the men and women who constitute the civilised world. It touches character at innumerable points, elevating or degrading, ennobling or corrupting. Even the feeble novel that has no power directly to inspire, and which cannot be accused of direct defilement, by the mere time that is spent over it fosters habits of lassitude and intellectual vacuity that react disastrously on life. And if we can point to a novelist of splendid genius, of brilliant artistic gifts, and of lofty and ideal purpose, we may know that we are pointing to one who is rendering service in the "making" of the century on a par with the preacher, the man of science, and the statesman.

How shallow, then, is the criticism of those who speak of novels as if they were all of one class! To ask us to approve or to condemn novel-reading without distinction is like asking us to approve or condemn associating with our fellows. It all depends on *what* company we keep. There is good company in the novel-world as in the human world, and there is bad company. There is company that is wholesome, purifying, bracing; and there is company that is lowering, debasing, debauching. The one is to be sought, the other to be shunned. There are, indeed, novels of incident and movement, like the romances, for instance, of Wilkie Collins or Stanley Weyman, which are quite free from all taint of corruption, which are excellent

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as a rest and distraction from the cares and fatigues of life so long as they are indulged in with strict moderation and not allowed to absorb time and energy sacred to duty, which nevertheless have little or no direct action on the characters of men. But there are other novels which strengthen all that is good in men, purifying, fortifying, enlisting sympathy for all that is beautiful and true, wakening into life the highest aspirations and quickening the holiest ideals.

For what is the novel at its best and noblest? It is a study of human character, of its growth and development, of the forces and situations that act upon it, of the forces within the soul that may be roused to do battle with the outward forces, of the great human drama enacted, mostly without spectators or audience, in every bosom—the drama, which, if only it is faithfully told with the inspiration of sympathetic vision, has never failed to command, to absorb the interest of him before whom its silent action is unveiled. To most men the evolution of human character is the most profoundly interesting of all objects of thought and observation. It gives its strongest hold on men to every department of art. And the historian, the dramatist, the novelist, and the poet speak with the most luminous directness on this transcendent theme.

And the great novelist can infuse an interest into this which engages not the cultured and the highly-trained only, but the ordinary men and women of the market, of the street, of the home. He can find readers to whom historian, dramatist, and poet

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appeal in vain. He does not demand the intellectual preparedness which they demand. He is for the multitude, and especially for the young. His theme is the theme of the preacher. But his congregation neither leave empty pews nor slumber while he drones or thunders.

And the nineteenth century was the richest the world has ever known in novelists. To take the greatest only and Great Britain only: we have Scott, Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, Meredith. In the next rank the names are a host: Charles Reade, Bulwer-Lytton, Trollope, Mrs. Gaskell, Mrs. Oliphant, Hardy, Stevenson, Hall Caine, Mrs. Ward—whom the ultimate verdict may perhaps set yet higher—and a legion more. I select George Eliot, not because I do not believe that there are others who may rank with her, but, first, because she best illustrates the lofty influence a novelist may wield; secondly, because I love her best of all; and, thirdly, as a protest against the depreciation fashionable at the moment, and a testimony of faith in her security in the end of a place among the immortals.

"George Eliot," for woman though she was, she has made that name her own, was of an intellectual type among the noblest. The strange cast of her features, from brow to chin, somewhat harsh in a woman, was that of three other great leaders and inspirers of men—John Henry Newman, the mighty re-inforcer of the Roman Church in our century; Savonarola, the fiery assailant of the corruptions of that Church four centuries ago; and, in a refined and glorified form, the sublime

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Dante, greatest seer and prophet since the apostolic time. Like Charlotte Brontë, her great predecessor and compeer, she was bred amid rustic and obscure surroundings, and there was nothing in girlhood to promise extraordinary achievement. But the incalculable energies of genius were there, and she, the country-bred woman, issuing from the narrow circle of the little market-town, became not only the most charming story-teller of her day, but, through her stories, a mighty moral force playing on the evolution of society and stamping her thought and sentiment and ethics on tens of thousands of earnest minds.

And what a procession of books they are, these stories of hers—rising by sure development from the short yet perfect tales of the “Scenes of Clerical Life,” through the noble stories of Adam Bede and Maggie Tulliver, to name no others, to the great culminating epic—for it is nothing less—of “Middlemarch,” in which the life and thought and intricate interrelations of a whole town, a whole society, are set before us, and not only Dorothea and Ladislav, Lydgate and Rosamond, Fred Vincey and Mary Garth become our intimate acquaintances whose very souls we read; but in their several degrees of fulness, Fairbrother and Mrs. Cadwalader, Mr. Brooke and Celia and Sir James, Caleb Garth and Bulstrode, Featherstone and Raffles, and a score or two more are presented to us in vivid strokes, and engage our enduring affection or waken our detestation, stir our pity or arouse our contempt, in the marvellous reality and individuality of their persons.

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George Eliot, then, paints on a growing scale. She begins with vignettes ; goes on to full-sized pictures ; and proceeds at last to vast canvasses covered with innumerable figures, not motionless as in the painter's art, but moving in and out among each other constantly, yet always dominated by the laws of balance and proportion and perspective, so that the artistic whole is never marred.

And in these wonderful romances it is the development of character that gives everywhere the inmost interest to the tale. And the forces determining the development of character are plain to be discerned by every thoughtful reader. They are, first and foremost, the inborn, inexplicable, original individuality of the person, that element in his being which it is impossible to connect either with heredity or with environment, the *vera persona*, the actual self, of that particular soul. Then, secondly, and in all George Eliot's writings most strongly marked, heredity, the qualities inherited with form and feature, from father or mother or forbears further back in the ancestral line. Thirdly, contact with others, the impact for good or evil of other souls, lifting up or dragging down, always deflecting in some degree the development of the inward nature. And, fourthly, the combat with circumstances, the impact of fortune or misfortune, the opportunities, the exaltations, the depressions, the temptations, that come from the play of outward happenings all around the casket of the individual life. These four, personality, heredity, companionship, circumstances, are the great intermingling forces that determine the drama, and in

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the mutual play of these four and their sum of effect is the interest, the purpose, the power, the thrill of the immortal stories told to the world by George Eliot.

There is no pair in all George Eliot's writings that illustrate these things more luminously than Tom and Maggie Tulliver in "The Mill on the Floss." First, Tom. He inherits on his mother's side all the family pride, the steadfast integrity, the perfectly sincere self-righteousness, the narrowness of sympathy, the business faculty of the Dodsons; on his father's the inflexibility of will, the liability to violent prejudice, the absolute and enduring fixity in such prejudice, which brought the kindly old miller to so pathetic an end. And to these he adds as his own individual contribution, so to speak, to his character a passion for justice—a justice which he would be the first to administer to himself but that he is honestly convinced that he never does anything wrong, a justice which he wields against others with unrelenting sternness, which he permits no affection to deflect, and which falls with cruel power on the one human being subject to him—subject mainly through her love for him—Maggie, his sister. And with all that sternness, all that virtual cruelty of his, no reader can withhold a certain respect and admiration from Tom Tulliver, as the stress of misfortune presses on him and with dogged and unflinching will, and persistent loyalty to his father's memory, by slow degrees he builds up again the family prosperity. But there is marvellous steadiness in the hand that draws him; and Tom, the school-boy, who punishes

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with his displeasure the little Maggie whose carelessness has cost him his pet rabbits, is the veritable father of Tom, the substantial young merchant, who turns Maggie, the crushed and broken-hearted woman, from his door, because she has betrayed the sacred bonds of obligation.

But it is Maggie herself who gives sample of all the great novelist's powers. Maggie Tulliver and Tertius Lydgate, those two — drawn from far-sundered periods of her authorship—I should pronounce the two most wonderful examples of George Eliot's power of drawing the evolution of character, did not a score of other figures—Adam Bede and Hetty Sorrell, Romola and Tito, Dorothea, Ladislav, and Bulstrode—rise up in protest against the verdict even as I pronounce the words.

But Maggie Tulliver :—First, the little brown girl, a mass of imagination and emotion, hungering always for affection, but meeting none save the fitful condescension of brother Tom, alternating with harshest judgments, and the sparing caresses of the anxious, toiling father, with his one phrase of endearment, "the little wench." Then all through childhood the passionate outbursts whenever her own affections met a rebuff, the indignant protests burning unspoken in the little heaving bosom against the wise saws and cramping precepts of the dreaded aunts, the revelation of new possibilities in life when poor deformed Philip first betrayed to her the glory of her great dark eyes. By and by the family misfortunes and the great hunger in the maiden's breast for happiness, for response to all the tangled longings of her heart.

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Then Thomas à Kempis, with his calm wisdom, his gospel of self-renunciation, his crucifix held before the eyes ; and the wave of devotion and consecration sweeping over that hot young spirit. Then Philip again among the pines in the Red Deeps, the leaping of heart to heart, the clandestine meetings through one delicious year ; the discovery by Tom, the forced vow of separation ; by and by the father's tragic death, and the years of patient toil on the brink of womanhood, without joy, without hope, the stern yoke of duty fitted heavy on the shoulders. Then at last the nobly formed and gifted woman, glorious in her unconscious beauty, for the first time plunged into the society of the wealthy, the educated, the refined. The fatal companionship with Stephen Guest, her cousin's all but acknowledged lover, man of the world, gentleman according to the accepted standards, loyal of heart, by temperament truthful, honourable, intending to do right, but never trained in self-restraint or self-denial—and the rush of passion between him and Maggie, terrible in its strength, of a vividness to which the old love for Philip could show no match ; and then the hand to hand struggle by this woman to retain faithfulness, loyalty, obedience to olden obligation, the failures of resolve at critical moments when eyes met or low-voiced whispers pleaded, and finally the supreme conquest over the heart's longings, when it was too late to save the happiness of others or to escape the goads of gossip and of scandal ; the poor wrecked life quenched at last, while still years were few and youth was strong, in the flood of the beloved river that had flowed

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past her childish home, the flood that beat brother and sister down in a common death.

It is in the portrayal of the awful conflict in this woman's spirit, between the passion of her heart and the dictate of her conscience, under the wooing of Stephen Guest, that George Eliot gives us the very essence of her gospel of morals in more concentrated phrase than in any other of her writings that I recall, unless it be in some of the utterances of *Romola*.

He is pleading with her to forget all other ties and accept the fact of their love as the pointing of the one right path. "O it is difficult," she cries in response, "life is very difficult! It seems right to me sometimes that we should follow our strongest feeling;—but then, such feelings continually come across the ties that all our former life has made for us—the ties that have made others dependent on us—and would cut them in two. . . . Many things are difficult and dark to me; but I see one thing clearly—that I must not, cannot seek my own happiness by sacrificing others. Love is natural; but surely pity and faithfulness and memory are natural too. And they would live in me still and punish me if I did not obey them." And then when, later on, poor Maggie already irretrievably compromised, Stephen urges that "the natural law" of their mutual love "surmounts every other, we can't help what it clashes with":—"It is not so, Stephen—I'm quite sure that is wrong. I have tried to think it again and again; but I see, if we judged in that way, there would be a warrant for all treachery and cruelty—we should justify breaking

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the most sacred ties that can ever be formed on earth. If the past is not to bind us, where can duty lie? We should have no law but the inclination of the moment." And then presently again: "Faithfulness and constancy mean something else besides doing what is easiest and pleasantest to ourselves. They mean renouncing whatever is opposed to the reliance others have in us—whatever would cause misery to those whom the course of our lives has made dependent on us." And then finally: "We can't choose *happiness* either for ourselves or for another: we can't tell where that will lie. We can only choose whether we will indulge ourselves in the present moment, or whether we will renounce that, for the sake of obeying the divine voice within us—for the sake of being true to all the motives that sanctify our lives. I know this belief is hard; it has slipped away from me again and again; but I have felt that if I let it go for ever, I should have no light through the darkness of this life." Such are the phrases wrung from the tortured girl in the agony of her struggle. There are those who would count them frivolous or secular, because they are printed on the pages of a novel. But they represent the inmost thought and conscience of George Eliot. And they spoke so directly to the thought and consciences of men in the closing of the nineteenth century, that you will find them transferred to the pages of many a published anthology alongside with texts from A Kempis or Tauler or Augustine or the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures themselves.

So Maggie Tulliver grew from the seed of her

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own delicately compacted individuality under the stress of the three great forces of heredity, companionship, and circumstances, till she became fit figure to be prophetess to us of the deepest and loftiest that the great soul who created her had to teach.

And Lydgate : Do we not see in him also the gradual shaping of a character through force at least of companionship and circumstances acting—but alas, in his case, for grievous injury and deterioration—on a spirit originally most finely wrought ?

A young man of fine and free ambitions—brightly gifted, an enthusiast for his great profession, dreaming of discovery to be made by hard and persevering toil for the blessing of mankind—quick to respond to all noble prompting—one who, if Dorothea Brooke or Mary Garth had become his wife, would have risen to splendid achievement and most just honour. But Rosamond Vincey captures him. And the daily pressure of her small and selfish nature, together with the cramping, sordid cares in which her vanities engulf him, corrode his manliness, make him first a mendicant for favours, then a compromiser with the highest law of professional honour, then by degrees a mere medical drudge, a fee-seeker, a cajoler of fashionable patients, a courtly writer on rich men's diseases, a weary, worn, morose plodder, instead of the noble exponent of his science he had it in him to become. And we learn the awful lesson that the frivolous, the narrow, and the vain are not mere negligible quantities in the moral world, but corrosoders of the consciences

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of others, destroyers of virtue, desolaters of a manly and nobly purposed life.

This obligation stamped upon us by our past, by our race, our family, our parentage, by the memories of our childhood, by the bonds we have voluntarily taken on us in the years that are gone, by the set and drift of circumstances in which our lives have become imbedded—the awful sanctity of such obligation, the misery, the disaster, the moral ruin that are the fruit of its defiance—these are illustrated again and again in George Eliot's pages, in the call to Deronda to be the faithful son of his race in spite of all Gentile allurements; in the call to Fedalma, in the wonderful dramatic romance of "The Spanish Gypsy," to give up the Christian knight her lover, and take the place of leader of her father's forlorn and hunted people; in the call to the Christian knight himself to stand true champion of Christendom at the cost of the love that fills all his veins with fire. It is, I think, the supreme ethical lesson George Eliot has to teach.

But there is another which we may not pass by altogether—and one that is of moment to every soul amongst us in every hour of waking life.

We see Bulstrode—a man whose religion was by no means a mere hypocrisy—under the stress of circumstances becoming in one crucial moment the virtual murderer of the scoundrel, Raffles. You remember the narrowing down of his doom upon him. How in the crookednesses of his early life Raffles had been his confidant and agent, how in the days of his high prosperity and repute this Raffles fastens on him again, how by bribe after

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bribe Bulstrode strives to purchase his silence, how at last Raffles lies in mortal illness and it rests, to all human seeming, with him, by strict or lax adherence to the physician's orders, to save or sacrifice his life ; how he honestly means to save it by a strict adherence, how nevertheless, secure in this intention, he permits his thought to dwell on the stupendous relief it would be to him were Raffles indeed to die—till the image of that is bright and vivid in his mind, the image of his upright intention faint and pale. And then when the moment comes he permits that to be done by the ignorant nurse which swiftly brings the fatal end. You remember, again, how Tito—in the noble romance of "*Romola*"—harbours vaguely the design to redeem his foster-father from Turkish slavery, but lets his pleasure-loving nature dwell rather on the ease and brilliance to be enjoyed in Florence by spending the rescue money on himself, how he pushes away from him the thought of the tortured galley-slave on the plea that the time for action has not yet arrived, how thus the image of the commanding duty grows faint and dull, the image of life in Florence with glorious *Romola* vivid and possessing ; and so when the hour strikes he lets the duty slip, and swiftly sliding down the moral incline, ends with treachery, cowardice, and cruelty foul as that of any criminal in history. In the stories of both these men and in many others, George Eliot teaches how the preparation for virtue or for crime, for heroic fidelity or for dastardly treachery, is made in the attention which the mind gives to images of good or of evil long before the

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crisis of action arrives—so that it would almost seem that by long habit the image of good may become so pale and nerveless that when the time comes it *cannot* command us, the image of evil so full of colour and strength that when the time comes we *cannot* resist it. The teaching is that the free action of our will—the field for the free action of conscience—is in the habitual attention we give through life to images divine and holy, or to images of greed or lust; and that if we fail to discipline ourselves well long before the hour of temptation, when the temptation comes our freedom will be gone, and we shall have no force at command to deliver ourselves out of the devil's hands. The teaching is : Practise the mind in contemplation of the pure, the good, the beautiful, the holy; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things—hold back the mind with a grasp of iron from harbouring images of the contaminating, the base, the foul; so only when the path must suddenly be taken to the right or to the left will you have any force to turn to the right and prefer the stony way to the flowery path of sin.

Such is the ethical teaching of this great novelist, this mighty moralist. And speaking to thousands of men and women for whom some of the old arguments for virtue, for goodness, for uprightness have lost their force, for whom the old supernatural sanctions are dying or dead, she has planted a noble ethics in the very nature and make of the soul itself, in the very structure and fibre of human life.

V

THE DRAMATIST: HENRIK IBSEN

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THE Dramatist may be regarded either from the literary or from the histrionic point of view—as the author of works to be read or as the maker of plays to be acted.

If we regard him in the latter capacity, and ask what he did in the making of the nineteenth century, we shall have to ask not only whether his literary page was of wholesome tendency, but whether the spectacle he provided fed the better or the worse sentiments in the human breast. And indeed the vast majority of the plays put upon the stage are never read as literature at all, so that it is their stage effects only that have to be considered. And for myself, I am one of those who recognise to the full the purifying and ennobling influence which the stage may yield. I cannot forget how for Athens of old it provided the very loftiest and most powerful expression of religion, touching the springs of awe and reverence as no other art in the history of the world perhaps has ever touched them. But then I remember that the theatre of Athens—and indeed the theatre of England in Shakspeare's day—lent

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itself to little spectacular effect, and presented actors by no means made up to look the part ; so that the impression was not sensuous, but purely intellectual and moral. And I have to confess that I greatly doubt whether the lavish scenic effects and costumes of the modern stage have tended to the elevation of its influence. We do not want the corruption of manners and of morals brought vividly before the eye, whether in the modern society of London or of Paris, or in the ancient court of Cleopatra.

But it is with the dramatist as the author of works to be read that I propose to deal. And here, too, as in the case of the novelist, I have to point out that the dramatist as such is neither to be praised nor to be condemned—that there is good company and bad among dramas as among novels and among men ; that there are dramas wholesome, purifying, bracing, and dramas lowering, debasing, debauching.

And the dramatist whom I select as greatest in the nineteenth century is one whom many believe to be demoralising rather than the reverse. I profoundly dissent from that opinion, and shall try to show the reason why. But before passing on to the analysis of some of the dramas of Ibsen and the attempt to expound their message, I point out in passing, and beg you to note the fact, that there is no scene in any play of his from first to last which, set upon the stage, presents anything to the eye to feed the lower side of our nature. His men and women discuss all the affections and the passions of mankind ; but they discuss them in armchairs or on garden benches, and you never find them trembling

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on the verge of setting base things before you visually. And I ask you to compare Ibsen in this with some very famous living English playwrights, of whom the same cannot be said.

Henrik Ibsen, unlike any other "Maker of the Nineteenth Century" whom we have hitherto considered, still lives in the world of men. He was born in 1828, and as lately as 1899 gave his latest drama to the world. When a youth of twenty, far away in his Scandinavian home, he caught the echoes of the struggles of Kossuth and of Mazzini, and they stirred in him the poet's powers. The heroic temper, the love of freedom, the strife for justice and for truth, always set his pulse a-beating. And the next twelve or fifteen years of his life saw the composition of several dramas of extraordinary genius, most prominent and powerful among them those which made the old Norse life live again, and in hero and in viking recalled the glories half-historic, half-mythic, of the bold and vigorous youth of the Scandinavian race. He clung to the belief that that dauntless temper might still be found along the fjords and on the mountain sides of Norway; and in 1864 the opportunity came, and the call to the ancient patriotism sounded on the ears of the sturdy fishers and farmers of that grim and rock-girt coast. Germany in her might swept down on little Denmark, and the king of Norway and Sweden had given his pledge that his people would not stand by and see their Danish kinsmen wronged. High beat the heart of Ibsen. Loud was his cry for the great encounter. But lo! both king and people failed his hopes, and not a ship was

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manned, not a gun was fired, to save Danish soil from the invader's tramp.

Then a vast sorrow and a mighty anger fell on the heart of Ibsen. He shook the dust of Norway from his feet, and from a far retreat in Southern Europe sent back to his countrymen his reproach and scorn in the two dramatic poems, so overwhelming in their power, "Brand" and "Peer Gynt." They were the burning denunciations of a prophet. They laid the lash without sparing on the Norwegian people. But so magnificent were they in their strength, so redolent of fjord and tarn and precipice and skree, that they went straight to the Norwegian heart, and no Norwegian to-day can climb the fells or cross the glacier, baffle in his boat the sudden storm, or hear the roar of the cataract smiting the trembling rock, but Brand seems to stride beside him or Peer to be bragging at his elbow. No other poems ever so quickly or so completely took a whole race by storm.

But if the collapse of the national repute was the occasion of these two extraordinary dramas, like the works of all largest genius, they have their roots deep in the universal experience and character of man. Their lesson is for all time and all lands. And we can treat them without further reference to the immediate circumstances of their origin.

Let me briefly rehearse both stories, familiar now no doubt to many, but probably unknown still to most; since even those, in this country, who count themselves critics or disciples of Henrik Ibsen, for the most part entirely ignore these two, the most transcendent productions hammered on his anvil.

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"Brand" was published in 1866, when Ibsen was thirty-eight. It is primarily a passionate plea for whole-heartedness as against the half-heartedness which was corroding the world and taking all truth and courage out of human life. "All or nothing" is its perpetually recurring motto; and Ibsen would have more hope of a man thorough and whole-hearted in wrong, than of the trifler who has a little bit of morals and a little bit of religion and a little bit of worldliness; for evil can be transmuted into good, but cowardice can never be wrought to courage.

Brand is a stalwart young priest of the Lutheran Church, all afire to proclaim his doctrine of whole-ness, thoroughness in faith, in conduct, in devotion, in consecration to eternal truth, to all who will hear his word. "Everything or nothing" is his cry, and he is ready, eager, ardent to give himself utterly to his cause. But practical life has terrible experiences in store. Again and again he is confronted with the choice between being false, as he deems, to his foundation principle and sacrificing that which is to his heart inexpressibly dear. First, the call comes to him to settle as pastor in a remote and poverty-stricken village where the great cliffs shut out the sun well-nigh the whole year round; and after a fierce inward struggle he abandons for this nearer duty his dream of a mission covering the nation and redeeming his race. Next, he sees his beloved baby-boy sickening under the chill of his bleak and sunless home; and he believes that he is obeying the call of duty in letting the little one die rather than desert his parish. Next, his wife herself—Agnes,

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perhaps the sweetest and most pathetic heroine in all romance—pales under the rigour of the life and the ceaseless grief of the death of her child ; and Brand, grimly steadfast in his settled course, sees her too perish at his side. Finally, having driven back as temptations of the evil one all the pleadings of human love, that he may not swerve in the discharge of his office, he conceives the idea that the religion of his people may be made large and real and strong by building them with his little fortune a great and noble church in place of the cramped and dilapidated building with whose traditions are woven vague reminiscences of the old pagan faith. But on the day of the great ceremonial of the opening, when his praise is loud in the mouths of all men, it is revealed to him, as his fingers wander over the organ-keys, that this dream too is empty, that lofty arches and architectural glory make for display and materialistic convention rather than for true and pure religion, and he flings the keys of the church into the rushing stream, and, worn and broken—his mind adrift in the delirium of madness—he calls the faithful to follow him up the mountain-scarp to the ice-temple on the pathless heights. The populace press upon his footsteps, but soon grow weary of the aimless toil, and drop away back to the village with its drudgery and sleepy contentment with the conventional religion. Then, bleeding and abandoned, the heart-broken priest mounts to the home of the winds and the snows, flings out on the empty air the passionate question why he has failed, wherein he has missed the will of God, and as the murderous avalanche crashes down

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on his devoted head, he hears amid its thunders a voice which answers, "He is God of Love."

The tragedy is overwhelming, and as one presses to the story's end, its wild and sonorous poetry, its awful and heartrending situations, deprive one of the power of reflection on what all this chaos of nobility and failure means. But days or weeks after—perhaps not till after a second or a third perusal—the meaning dawns. And one sees that Brand failed, in spite of the adhesion of his iron will from first to last to that which he deemed his duty, in spite of the absoluteness of his consecration and his sacrifice, because he beat back the promptings and pleadings of that natural affection and those human sympathies which God has given us as instruments indispensable in the discharge of the highest tasks to which human nature can be called.

As foil to Brand appears again and again upon the scene the district bailiff or sheriff, a functionary conscientious in the exercise of his duty within the limits prescribed by custom and tradition, but smug, self-satisfied, comfortable, portly, dapper, without a thrill of aspiration or one fibre that can respond to the lofty yearnings of the priest. And while Brand is beaten with many stripes and dies a broken and forsaken soul, this good official thrives and prospers and finds life a very agreeable thing.

"Brand" is the tragedy of *noble* failure; "Peer Gynt," which succeeded it in the following year, the tragedy of *ignoble* failure. Both are tragedies; they teach companion lessons; but they show opposite facets of the coin of truth.

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If Brand was great with the greatness of a hero soul, Peer Gynt was great only in his own esteem, a very littleness of littleness in his essential character. And in him Ibsen typifies the Norwegian people.

He is the son of a widowed peasant-woman reduced to the meanest poverty by his idleness and inveterate day-dreaming. Young, handsome, athletic, he has boundless faith in his talents and his destiny. He will be emperor of the world ; but meanwhile he lies sky-gazing, the crops unreaped and the cow and the goat neglected. He weaves yarns by the league of his prowess and adventure, and pours them into his mother's ear. She breaks out in reproaches : why, that very day their rich neighbour's daughter is to be wedded, whom he might have had were he not the village ne'er-do-well ; he is not even invited to the marriage. But he springs up and goes, uninvited though he be, and forces himself on the festive company. Then comes to the festival the beautiful Solveig, pure and innocent in her budding maidenhood ; and a strange sense fills Peer that with her he could be another man, that to love and be loved by her would be his soul's redemption. But her mother forbids her to dance with one of such ill-repute. And Peer turns from her to the bride, and seizing her in his arms, climbs the mountain like a goat, and the pair are quickly far beyond pursuit. He deserts her next day with a flout, and flings himself into such dissipation as the mountain haunts afford. Then presently Solveig appears before him, sweet and innocent and fair as ever. She had been irresistibly drawn to him, by divine intuition discerning in him

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a something deeper and holier than any other eye could see—the thought God had of him when He breathed into him the breath of life. And for a little while Peer turns to Solveig, building her a little timbered house which shall be their home up there in the mountain height. But the steadiness of faithfulness is not in him, and he wanders away and leaves her there under the excuse that he has work to do ; while there falls on his ear through the widening distance her promise that she will wait for him there till he comes back.

Then he sets out on a career marked throughout by self-sufficiency, self-seeking, and self-conceit ; while he is for ever priding himself on his self-development, self-realisation, and self-respect—the phrase for self-reverence and for self-sufficiency, for being one's true self and indulging oneself, being almost the same in Norwegian, and he not perceiving the difference between them at all, on which confusion turns the whole action and lesson of the story. He becomes a wealthy merchant in America, a mighty capitalist, a great social figure ; loses all by a sudden turn of fortune, but still goes on playing one *rôle* after another to his own intense satisfaction—man of learning, Oriental prophet, king of a madhouse, I know not what—always pluming himself on his self-realisation, his perfect culture of himself, and never suspecting the truth that his real self—the self God meant him to be—is utterly swathed and buried and stifled and destroyed in his immeasurable self-conceit and fathomless selfishness. Even an evil self he does not fairly develop. He is always half-hearted,

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always sitting on the fence, always hedging between his earthly and his heavenly interests, never wholly giving himself up to one purpose, save only his self-indulgence. And so all true manliness, all distinctive personality is worn out of him, till at last he finds himself an old man, weary, shiftless, penniless, on his native hills ; and one comes to him commissioned to put his soul in the smelting-pot to be smelted down to raw material for the making of other souls hereafter. "For," says this emissary, "thou hast never truly been thyself." "Never been myself ?" cries Peer.

"I could almost smile ;
I have been myself the livelong while ;
Why, if in the depths of my heart thou shouldst stare,
Thou wouldst come upon Peer and nothing but Peer."

But clearly he who confronts him means by "being oneself" something other than he has ever conceived ; so he asks, "What, then, is this 'being oneself' ?" And the strange messenger answers—

"To be thyself is thyself to slay ;
Or, lest thou follow not what I say,
Let being thyself be thus expressed :
'Tis to wear God's thought of thee as thy crest."

So, that his soul may not be doomed to the grim annihilation of the smelting-pot, old Peer goes wandering to find some one who shall tell him where his true self really is, that he may reclaim it and be saved. And at last he sees a light dimly burning, and pushing his painful way through briar

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and thicket, falls at the feet of Solveig—an old, blind woman, still standing in the doorway of the little timbered house, waiting, waiting, waiting. And after the first cry of recognition he urges his momentous question—

“Where has Peer Gynt been from first till now,
With the mark of his calling upon his brow?
Been as he sprang from the thought of God?
Cannot tell? If not, I must under the sod.
Where was I myself, as the whole, the true,
Where was I with God’s stamp on my brow?”

And Solveig answers—

“In my faith, in my hope, in my love for thee.”

That love has made her life a beautiful song, for the wealth of love is in giving, not receiving. Then she takes him weeping to her arms and croons over him a cradle song—

“Sleep, ah, sleep, my darling boy,
I will rock thee, I will watch ;”

and the soul of Gynt is saved by a love that is half wife’s, half tender mother’s.

Both Brand and Peer Gynt, then, teach, the one by example, the other by warning, the splendour of a life that is truly lived in loyalty to noble purpose, the meanness of a life that forgets God’s calling and knows no touch of self-devotion. But both teach also in the culminating verses with which they close that love is greatest of all ; that consecrated

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heroism itself will fail if the just call of love and sympathy have been thwarted, that even the mean and dastardly may be redeemed by the sympathy and love of another heart.

I have left bare time to touch on the long series of social dramas written in the thirty years that have elapsed since "Peer Gynt" first took the Norwegian people by storm, and by which alone Ibsen is known and judged by the mass of his British critics. But in the more familiar medium of prose they all teach or illustrate the same great thought which palpitates through the noble poetry of those two mighty national dramas. They are a protest against conventionalism, against half-heartedness, against the bonds that fetter individuality and prevent men and women in this modern day from being "themselves," from realising God's meaning in them, from "wearing God's thought of them as a crest." The theme is, indeed, illustrated in a vast variety of circumstances, but always it is there: How in the midst of society, with the conventional rules that bind us all, with the real obligations which we are under to those among whom we live, children to parents, parents to children, husbands to wives, wives to husbands, citizens each to all and all to each—how are we to realise that free and individual self for which God has compacted us—compacted you, compacted me—to realise that thought of us which God had when he breathed into each the breath of life? How am I to wear God's thought of me as my crest?

—It is in the marriage relation that this problem comes out most vividly in our modern society. For

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marriage is a merging of two individualities, and involves of necessity a certain subordination of each to the other, a certain modification of self-dom and adoption of the other's sentiments and sympathies and purposes. That, indeed, is its essence and its glory. And yet it is fatal if the original individuality be lost. God's thought of me, my inmost self, I must try to keep, though I desire to be the most true and faithful husband. Thou must still wear God's thought of thee as thy crest, though thou wouldst be the most faithful and loving wife. The bearing and forbearing of true marriage is the very quintessence of the problem set before us all in all the relations of life. And again and again Ibsen sets us the problem, telling us stories in which husband or wife acted thus or thus, under the stress of this twofold condition, acted rightly or wrongly—Ibsen never tells us whether he thinks this one or that one was right or wrong in the culminating word or deed—but by the tremendous hold his impersonations get of us, he leaves us wondering, pondering, thinking, weighing, arguing for or against, and gradually realising more and more how great, how incessant, how ubiquitous the problem is. So is it when, in "A Doll's House," Nora leaves her husband because he has only cared for her as a toy, and has not helped her to realise her womanhood. So is it when, in "The Lady from the Sea," Dr. Wangel at last gives Ellida, his wife, free leave to go with the olden lover who wields so weird a power over her; and with the snapping of her formal bond to her husband, the power of the lover is in a moment shattered, and the loyalty of

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her heart springs back to her husband, Wangel. So is it in many another drama. You put it down bewildered, puzzled? "Was he right?" "Was she wrong?" you say; and as the days pass the problem turns up again and again in thought, this perpetual, universal problem of the reconciliation of our obligations to others with our own moral and spiritual self-realisation.

And other vast and momentous truths, too, are wrought into the lives and words of these men and women whom Ibsen presents to us with such marvellous reality and power. I will but state one more of them and have done. Ibsen is the hater of convention. And he holds that there are not only conventional lies current in the world, false and rotten bases of conduct, but that there is conventional truth as well. He teaches that the vigorous life of a newly discovered truth is in its youth and freshness. Then it seizes the imagination, cleanses the heart, nourishes and stimulates the conscience. But many and many a truth, by the time it is eighteen or nineteen years old, is withered and sapless and has no health in it. It has all the evil effects of a lie—is, in fact, a lie in the form in which it is apprehended by ordinary men and women. It is usually when a truth has finished its fight for a footing and is already professed by a majority that it enters on this stage of decrepitude. In "An Enemy of the People," "the compact majority" is represented as always wrong; the few, the individuals are right.

The meaning is that the mere fact of a truth becoming accepted tends to rob it of the juice of

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life, to make it in effect a falsehood, without power to mould character and life. Instead of conviction it becomes convention. Even the sublimest of truths—that "God is our Father," that "God is Love," that "Christ is a Saviour," may suffer from this fatal senile decay. When it becomes embedded in creeds, professed as a matter of course, universally voted respectable, the life is no longer in it, and all sorts of false doctrines wholly incompatible with it are taken up alongside of it without a suspicion of discord.

And so a generation that is content with the truths discovered by its fathers or its grandfathers, and already wrought into the everyday professions of society, really knows not the wholesome taste and nutritive power of truth at all. We must find new truth for to-day, or at any rate clothe old truths in forms that shall make them strike home as new, if we are to have vigour, freshness, reality, inspiration in our lives. And it is the men who are for ever mouthing truths that have grown respectable that are murdering the fresh young life of humanity; the men who, perhaps crudely, yet with a glowing sincerity propound new truths, that shock and startle perhaps, yet are the ultimate saviours of society.

And so we part from this great, original, rugged, often grim and gloomy teacher, who stands like a weather-beaten rock defying the waves of criticism at the turning of the centuries. The more we know him, the more we shall learn from him; for he is that best teacher who compels us to think ourselves. There are those who have called him pessimist; but

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no man ever yet was pessimist who urged men on from truth to truth, who revered principle and fidelity as he reveres them, who believed in pressing ever on toward the unseen goal, who threw on men and women the responsibility of true self-realisation, of "wearing God's thought of them as a crest." ¹

¹ In all my views of Ibsen I have been largely influenced by my brother-in-law, Mr. Philip H. Wicksteed, who, in the year 1888, first called my attention to the great Scandinavian dramatist. See his "Four Lectures on Henrik Ibsen."

VI

THE CRITIC: MATTHEW ARNOLD

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OF Matthew Arnold, the Poet, the sweet singer—now strong, now gentle—of “The Eternal Note of Sadness,” I have spoken elsewhere.¹ But we cannot omit the Critics from the number of the wielders of intellectual and moral forces who helped to make the nineteenth century. And among English critics, at any rate, this same Matthew Arnold stands easily pre-eminent; and in that capacity we have to do with him at this present.

Matthew Arnold the Poet and Matthew Arnold the Critic seem at first sight to be absolutely opposed and contrasted individualities. In the Poet there is a sympathy, a tenderness, above all a self-control, that makes one feel: “Here is a man so touched with the emotion of our common humanity that he could never say one word which could hurt or sting or goad; we may safely put ourselves in his hands, secure that he will respect every shade of human feeling and judge us, not by the crude expression of

¹ “Faith and Doubt in the Century’s Poets.” J. Clarke and Co., 1898.

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our thoughts, but by the deep inward feeling which underlies all words." But we turn to the Critic, and we find one who delights in dainty barbs that prick; who makes travesty not seldom of things seriously and conscientiously said; whose delicate irony knows no mercy; who will not let us off when we have said or written foolish things simply because our feelings may be sensitive, or because in our blundering way we meant well in the words we used.

Arnold the Poet is, to my mind, nobler and greater than Arnold the Critic. But Arnold the Critic has forced multitudes to revise careless or second-hand thinking, and has helped to destroy many a fashion or profession which was a protection to untruth. And I find the fundamental unity between Arnold the Critic and Arnold the Poet in an intense loyalty and passion—I will not say for truth, but for truthfulness—for thought, for sentiment, and for expression absolutely truthful and sincere, as closely in touch with the reality of things as the structure of mind and heart will allow.

Matthew Arnold's criticism covered an immense range of subject matter, social, political, and religious. Let us touch briefly on the social and political utterances, and then dwell as fully as may be on the religious.

And having so little time for so much matter, it will perhaps be best that we should almost confine ourselves to the examination of certain phrases of our Critic in which he packed into the smallest compass the thoughts he most desired to impress.

And while I shall have very seriously to question

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some parts of Matthew Arnold's teachings, there are others which have, in my opinion, worked for nothing but good, and worked most effectively in the mind of the nineteenth century towards its close.

The true purpose of a true human life, he teaches, is "to grow towards perfection." All apparent advances in civilisation which do not tend to develop perfection in the individuals of the human race are so many mischievous illusions. And there are many purposes in life most sedulously taught and praised among us which have not this tendency at all. They do not help to make men happy, or wise, or good. They do not help us to that temper which Arnold praises in a phrase borrowed from Swift, the temper of "sweetness and light." There is a full half of Arnold's whole doctrine in this one little paragraph, which should be very carefully read and allowed to sink into the mind :—

"The pursuit of perfection is the pursuit of sweetness and light. He who works for sweetness and light, works to make reason and the will of God prevail. He who works for machinery, he who works for hatred, works only for confusion. Culture" (which he has described as being "a study of perfection") "looks beyond machinery; culture hates hatred; culture has one great passion, the passion for sweetness and light."

Elsewhere in many places he adds to sweetness and light, life and sympathy. Culture is the study of perfection; and perfection is the constant growing in sweetness, and in light, and in life, and in sympathy.

You perceive that Arnold speaks of "machinery"

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as of a very hateful thing. And he has in mind two great truths. The first is that we are so apt to look on the machine as if it were itself the end. We boast of our freedom, of our vast population, of our huge coal supply, of our railroads, of our wealth, of our religious organisations, as if they were in themselves each a great good. But they are only good as machinery, and the machinery is only good if kept always steadfastly and consciously in subordination to a good purpose which they can help us to fulfil. And the good purpose they may help us to fulfil is growth towards perfection, increase of sweetness and light, of life and sympathy. Unless they help these, they are a great curse blocking the way. And in so many minds the machinery is loved, but the purpose forgotten ; and then machinery—so holds Matthew Arnold—is hateful.

But in another way, too, he finds machinery often hateful. For one form of machinery is party-organisation and sect-organisation. I myself am a party man, holding party the necessary machinery by which we may work for certain great and noble ends. I am not myself a sect-man, for I belong to a religious group which disclaims sect ; but I own it is hard sometimes, both for outsiders and for insiders too, to distinguish this group from just one more religious sect. But, however that be, heart and soul I accord with Arnold in hating some of the developments of party-spirit and of sect-spirit. These political and religious organisations do again and again so lapse from their high purpose, that they make for bigotry and fanaticism, for misrepresentation and hate. And those of us who become

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members of party or of sect, or of what looks like sect, need to pray and strive all the time to keep free from the evil tempers these things are apt to breed ; and to see to it that we bring into them such a culture, such a constant seeking to use them for developing perfection, that out of them shall grow increased sweetness and light, increased sympathy and life.

All this discussion is in the essay on "Culture and Anarchy" ; and that essay contains also certain other famous words and phrases which our Critic has stamped upon the lips and minds of Englishmen. Thus it contains his division of all ordinary Englishmen into the three great classes, the Barbarians, the Philistines, and the Populace—the Barbarians being the aristocracy with their love of ease and of field-sports, their polite and sometimes noble bearing, and their externality and want of soul ; the Philistines being the middle-class, from the great manufacturer or merchant to the superior working-man, with all their organisations and machinery and their sad inaccessibility to ideas ; the Populace being the rude mob with their leaning, as he thinks, to riot and the plentiful imbibing of beer.

Now as I suppose most of us, I and my hearers and readers, belong to that middle-class which is nicknamed Philistine, we may leave the Barbarians and the Populace alone, and meekly hear what Mr. Arnold has to say about us, and why he gives us the name. He gives us the name because, as he says, "it gives the notion of something particularly stiff-necked and perverse in the resistance to light and its

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children ; and therein it specially suits our middle-class, who not only do not pursue sweetness and light, but even prefer to them that sort of machinery of business, chapels, and tea-meetings " which makes up so dismal and illiberal a life. Pretty severe that, we shall feel, and very far from just. But if it does not represent the fact, it does represent our danger ; and I would plead with all of you—yes, and plead most earnestly with myself, because I know the danger—not to fall in love with the machinery itself, whether the counting - house business of commerce, or the committees and conferences and meetings that gather round corporate religion, but to keep minds ever open to the purpose beyond, the growing into sweetness and light, and hearts ever open to sympathy with thoughts and modes of life quite different from our own, refreshing our souls with draughts from the wells of wholesome literature far outside our own personal interests, and keeping in touch with the broad life of humanity far beyond our counting-houses and committee-rooms. An open mind, an open heart, these are the cure for the Philistinism on which our critic pours the copious streams of his satire.

In the same essay is the famous teaching concerning Hellenism and Hebraism. And this cuts very close to the roots of life. Two great and leading mental habits have alternately swayed the movements of the world. And the Hebrews, or Israel, best exemplify the one ; the Hellenes, or Athens, best exemplify the other. Israel's supreme idea was righteousness. That was the burden of the prophets. And a mental habit governed by the

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idea of obedience, of conscience, Arnold stamps with the name of Hebraism. In Greece the idea that shaped the nation's soul was knowledge, wisdom. That was the burden of the sages. And a mental habit governed by that idea, the idea of seeing and knowing things as they truly are, Arnold stamps with the name of Hellenism. And from these two, study of conduct, study of wisdom, pursuit of duty, pursuit of knowledge—the perfection of mankind, increase of sweetness, life, light, sympathy, the happiness and goodness of men, have to be brought forth.

But needful as each is, the balance between the two has never been long maintained. Hellenism had sway in Greece and Rome, but “the world by wisdom knew not God,” and anarchy swept down on the classic civilisation.

But the day came when the Church, representative of Hebraism, got all into her own hands. Hellenism was strangled, and obedience to rules, rites, ceremonies, pilgrimages, penances, took its place. But that brought on the period known through history as pre-eminently “the dark ages.” Every slavery and debasement of mind and body flourished, and the intellect of the world slept save in a chosen few.

Then at the renaissance Hellenism was born again, and the history of Europe since then has been the competition of the two great habits—rule of knowledge, rule of duty—for the leadership of civilised mankind.

Now the complaint of Matthew Arnold is that just as the wave of Hellenism was rising to

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its height, and art, literature, poetry, science, discovery were opening a new and more splendid world, all this so far as Britain is concerned was nipped and spoilt by that counter-movement of Hebraism which is known by the name of Puritanism.

Puritanism was an intense revival of the Bible, but of the Bible unilluminated by any discriminating sagacity. It was a fierce strike for righteousness, but for a righteousness conceived in a narrow and ignorant spirit. It was a vehement Hebraism unguided or uninformed by a spark or breath of Hellenism. And, according to Matthew Arnold, just when the need of the world was not so much to be urged to do the right as to learn by understanding wherein the right consisted, it proclaimed with the passion of Isaiah the inalienable claims of righteousness, but shut eyes and ears quite fast against any fresh consideration of the question wherein righteousness consisted.

And our Critic pertinaciously complained that still Puritanism is cramping and starving our life, that we are even to this day overdone with an excess of Hebraism, and suffering from sore lack of the Hellenic counterpoise. What we need above all else to-day, he taught, is that spontaneity of consciousness, free movement of intelligence, free Hellenic endeavour to see things as they truly are, should take the lead of the rude old Hebrew strictness of conscience.

Now surely here Matthew Arnold is both right and wrong—right that we need a larger and more open mind, that we should more intelligently

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inquire wherein duty and righteousness consist, be more ready to believe that there are urgent duties outside those conventionally accepted, be more hospitable to pleadings against habits of greed and sensuality, of drunkenness and war and cruelty. Right, yes, profoundly right. But wrong, yes, profoundly wrong in minimising the need of Hebraism. It is true, we judge in many things untruly wherein duty and righteousness consist. But it is at the least equally true that in multitudes of instances, knowing full well wherein duty and righteousness consist, we do not practise them. The needle of conscience points straight enough ; but we do not steer accordingly.

Why, I ask you young men, any one of you, wherein is your difficulty ? Wherein are you failing to move towards perfection ? Is it that you do not *know* your duty, or that you do not *do* it ? Is it that you do not know what is good and wise and noble, or that you pass it by ? More Hellenism, less Hebraism ? No, be not content with Hellenising. You cannot fruitfully Hellenise unless the centre and pivot of your being be your Hebraising. The first need for any real rise and spread of wisdom is that conscience be quick and vivid and strict. You know what is right by unswerving instinct. It is honesty and self-control, purity and courage and kindness. But the awful fact is that conscience is weak, and that knowing the right, you fail to face straight for it, but walk by the paths of the sinners, and the light of the child's sweet purity fades from the young man's eye.

But it is time that we hastened on to other

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teachings of our Critic closely concerned with the Bible and Christianity and religion.

The hard and mechanical treatment of the Bible, the treatment which makes it a magazine of texts for the proving of ecclesiastical doctrines, was hateful to this Critic's soul. For he knew that the Bible was a great living literature, beating with the passions, throbbing with the ardours and aspirations, instinct with the thought and sentiment of a great line of prophets, historians, psalmists, evangelists, each in his day full of the life of his country and his time, and striving to speak the needed word, without thought of doctrines of the Trinity or nicely balanced schemes of posthumous salvation. And he desired to quicken in the men of to-day a sense of the feeling breathing through it all, and an appreciation of the deep wisdom so often underlying its utterances. And so all through his writings you will find the quotations from Scripture which he weaves into his argument wonderfully fresh and alive—not like the dead inscriptions of a forgotten age, or the articles of a dictionary for the proving or refuting of a dogma, but like the words of men speaking to us now eye to eye in our own tongue out of the deep experience of life. And I would particularly commend to any of you who desire to know how real and alive and helpful even the difficult Epistles may be made by an understanding and sympathetic interpreter, the little book called "St. Paul and Protestantism," where that noble Apostle appears, not teaching the doctrines of orthodoxy at all, which his writings have been tortured to support, but pouring out lessons of life

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like those of Jesus himself, how self-renunciation is the secret of gladness, and how self-control and love are more than any theology the intellect of man ever constructed.

And that takes me to the deep wisdom and insight of the chapters in the famous "Literature and Dogma" which treat of the *method*, the *secret*, and the *temper* of Jesus. These, so Arnold would persuade us, make up the sum and substance of the teaching of Jesus. His *method* of finding the secret of life was quite a new one in his day, one from which even now we are constantly breaking away, though we acknowledge it with our lips. It was summed up in the hint, "The kingdom of God is within you," and taught us to look for light, for guidance, for the law of conduct, for the pearl of great price, within the heart and not in the outward world at all. Happiness and blessing were to be found, not in any ceremonials or observances, but in a certain manner of thinking and feeling and behaving inwardly.

That was the *method* of Jesus—to look within. And the *secret* of Jesus was the great and astonishing practical truth which he discovered by looking and searching thus within. The *secret* was that self-renunciation is the only way to peace and gladness—just the very thing which you would think must make against it is the only thing which can make for it. This priceless *secret*—itself the pearl—Jesus expresses in such phrases as, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the sake of the good news, the same shall save it"; or, "Take up your cross and

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follow me"; or, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me that I am mild and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

But as well as the *method* and the *secret*, Matthew Arnold tells us, we must heed the *temper* of Jesus—that temper in which alone the *method* can be rightly used, and the *secret* will come out true, and exaggeration and fanaticism will be avoided.

And the *temper*, says Arnold, must be one of mildness, or, to use his favourite word, "sweet reasonableness," a temper "full of grace and truth," as the disciples said; a temper such as is displayed in the "exquisite, mild, winning felicity" with which Jesus answers the hot, eager question, who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, by drawing to him a little child, and saying, "Whosoever receives the kingdom of God as a little child, the same is the greatest in it."

The *method*, the *secret*, the *temper*, inwardness, self-renunciation, sweet reasonableness—these, says Matthew Arnold, are the things Jesus gave himself to teach.

So far as it goes I do not think any critic ever gave a truer summary of the Christian gospel; and if we all lived in the spirit of that teaching the kingdom of heaven would indeed be realised here on earth. But there is to my mind one great and strange blindness on the part of Arnold which cramps, and in its degree vitiates, his interpretation both of Jesus and of the Prophets, both of the New Testament and of the Old. He does not recognise the teaching of Jesus concerning Our Father. He

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does not emphasise Israel's trumpet-tongued proclamation of a Living God.

Yet, as the greatest living scholar and critic of the New Testament—the famous German, Harnack—has even now declared, the relation of man to God as a child to a Father is the very centre and essence of the message and testimony of Jesus, out of which all the rest flows as its consequence and corollary. And the inspiring sentiment of the mighty prophets of the olden time—in which they braved the persecution of kings and the wrath of an apostate people—was passionate loyalty to a Living God of righteousness. Large areas of Matthew Arnold's writings are given up to the contention that the Israelites were no metaphysicians, that they never argued that God is a Person, that they never even considered what the terms Person and personality may mean. And it is true. But for all that, right or wrong, it was as a Person, a Being with thought and will and affection, one akin to man, however transcendently above him, that Isaiah and Micah and the Psalmists, Jesus and John and Paul, thought and spoke and felt concerning God. And he who falls short of recognising this misses the dominating note of their message to mankind.

Mr. Arnold, indeed, speaks of God. He even cites from the Bible language in which the Deity is personified. But he regards this as poetical, as an imagination, as outside the realm of scientific or critical truth ; and he insists that we are not justified in conceiving God as more than a "Power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness," or even "the stream of tendency by which all things seek to

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fulfil the law of their being." After "sweetness and light," those two are his most reiterated and celebrated phrases.

"A Power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness" : yes, God is that. The long history of the world, with its slow, sure straining off of evil, and the gradual drawing of mankind towards "sweetness and light and life and sympathy," proves that. But the teaching of the Prophets is that this Power is no dumb, blind, insensate force, but a very living God, who speaks to the prophet as a man to his friend, who approves or condemns, rewards or chastises. And the preaching of Jesus is that this Eternal Power is no other than our Heavenly Father, a God who cares for his children with more than a mother's love, one to whom we may go with our prayer, our contrition, or our thanksgiving, and know that the Father hears and heeds.

"The stream of tendency by which all things seek to fulfil the law of their being." That he offers us as a rigidly scientific definition of God. He is perfectly satisfied with it, repeats it again and again, dwells on it, caresses it. But a "stream of tendency" : who can be loyal or grateful to a stream? where are reverence and love and the enthusiasm of devout attachment to come in? And what is "tendency," that you can have a "stream" of it? And how can "things" "seek"? There is not a word in the definition which will bear examination. A stream must rise from some originating spring. It is a mere passive flow. Not such is the Power that lies behind the ages and the worlds, and holds them in its eternal grasp.

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And for an interpreter of the Hebrew Scriptures ? Why, those Scriptures are saturated with the sense of communion with a Living Being. And if Matthew Arnold had gone to Isaiah and said, "Why not call your Holy One a stream of tendency ; after all, all that you know is that there is a Power not yourself that makes for righteousness," Isaiah would have put him on a level with the workman who set the goldsmith to spread over his graven image with gold and cast for it silver chains ; and would have given us one more sublime and immortal outburst concerning "the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth."

I commend to you, then, the writings of Matthew Arnold, foremost English critic in his age, a true "maker" of the century that has ebbed to its close. They are pure and wholesome, stimulating, quickening, educative in a rare degree. They compel you to revise old opinions, to test the dead formulæ which prevail in State and Church ; to abjure and scorn manufactured views and a sham wisdom that has no true culture for its source. But while with some mighty wielders of words, it is safe for you to give yourselves over to their charm and power and let them lead you whither they will, with this master of criticism it is needful that you should keep alive and alert your own critical faculty, test and try each phrase and turn by the gauge of fact and truth.

And if now and again he mock at men or truths which you hold sacred, as mock he will, and you are irritated by his light and vivid raillery, if some-

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times his words seem words of a vain conceit, then turn to his pure and beautiful, most truthful and noble poetry, to "Dover Beach" or "Rugby Chapel," and learn how sweet and brave a spirit lay behind those clear blue eyes, how close to God beat the heart of him who yet dared not pray to Him as his living Friend and Father.

VII

*THE ICONOCLAST: CHARLES
BRADLAUGH*

VII

THE ICONOCLAST: CHARLES BRADLAUGH

AMONG the "Makers of the Nineteenth Century" I include the "Iconoclast," which is Greek for the image-breaker. In the eighth Christian century a great controversy raged in regard to the worship of sacred effigies—representations of Christ, of Mary, of the Saints. And the ardent reformers of the day were wont to resort to the forcible argument of shattering the images which to others were objects of veneration. And so the term "Iconoclast" has become incorporated in language to stand for one who is a breaker of such images as, held sacred by some, seem to him but symbols of the false and allurements to superstition and to wrong. And at the very outset of his career young Charles Bradlaugh chose that title under which to fight his vigorous battles, and he held by it till, at the outset of his more public political career in 1868, he elected to fling away all pseudonyms and stand always in his own person—the person of Charles Bradlaugh—strenuous and defiant before the world.

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And the world needs Iconoclasts—image-breakers—as well as reformers by milder methods. The “sweet reasonableness” which Matthew Arnold recommended, but did not always practise, will not do all the reforming work which the progress of mankind requires. The mellifluous flow of gentle speech will not always arouse the sleepers or prick the sluggards to activity; and the lava stream of a potent tongue moved by a mighty indignation has its function also in the making of the better world.

To break up and destroy the idols of the marketplace, the current phrases which stand for lies, the traditional notions which stand in the way of freedom and justice and mercy and progress and truth, is in itself a service to humanity in which many a hero has earned right well his crown of martyrdom. Without such rough and hardy pioneers to level the way before them, the meeker philanthropists would often find the path they would take impassable. It is honourable and necessary work, but it is work that is dangerous too.

It is dangerous, because tender affections and living reverences so intertwine with the superstitions of men, because the true and the false are so intimately mingled, because it is so easy to break down, so difficult to build up, so easy to destroy, so difficult to create, so easy to smash and crush, so difficult to separate the good and the evil and to see that with the dissolving of the evil no good be dissolved as well. The faiths, the reverences, the affections by which men live, which give them hope, enthusiasm, courage, are sacred things; and if you take away from a man that which inspires

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him to high and holy service, you do him and the world irreparable harm. So the business of iconoclasm is one of high value, a very necessary element of the advance of our race ; but it is one to be pursued with great caution lest with the evil you destroy the good, lest for the faith which you pull down you can build up no other equally inspiring in its place.

If the space around which the iconoclast has swung his club be left by him a chaos of broken pottery and chips of marble, his work needs supplementing that new forms of truth and beauty may be reared in that desert place.

A typical Iconoclast of the nobler sort was that Charles Bradlaugh, whose name has aroused a virulence of abuse and a passionate ardour of devotion such as accrue but to one man here and there in a generation or a century. How extraordinary a man he was to look on ! The only other I ever met in the least resembling him was Dr. Parker of the City Temple. A full figure of a man, muscular, titanic, great shoulders carrying an enormous head. Arms that could quell a mob, a chest that could send forth speech to overtop the groans or hootings of a multitude, a forehead towering to an enormous height, a nose so small that it seemed to belong to another face, but eyes, and still more lips, of tremendous character and power, with an underjaw so large and powerful that in moments of storm or indignation it gave an animal force to the countenance suggestive of something like ferocity.

And he began life with everything against him.

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From his very youth a writer against the current of popular sentiment, many men have held sentiments as unpopular as he. But few have carried in their breast his restless desire to proclaim them to mankind. In matters social, political, religious, he was on fire to bring all men to what he deemed the truth, with that strange flame which has leapt up in the hearts of prophets and set them with their burning words to confront and defy the world. Only in his case he was without that tremendous motive which in an Isaiah, a Paul, a Luther, a Wesley had such compelling and commanding force. These, one and all, felt themselves ambassadors of God. With them it was ever a "thus saith the Lord." They seemed to themselves to hear a living voice from out the eternal silence, a voice of One Unseen, Almighty, who spoke within them, whose interpreters they were to be. They had the immeasurable help of the conviction that a Friend, mightier, holier than all the tribes of men, was on their side. And so they spoke, faced buffetings and scourgings, mockery and hatred, ever with the sense that they were God's own preachers, God's own ministers. And so it was that their speech faltered not, and in the midst of scorn the ring of triumph was in their tones. To stand God and oneself against the world—that, indeed, calls for courage of no mean order. To be called fanatic, upbraided for heresies, mistrusted, misrepresented, hotly rebuked even by good men while others turn coldly from you, and old friendships are broken by the strain, even when your whole soul throbs with the conviction that God is with you, that is no light thing.

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But, ah ! what must it be when you have not that ; when you believe in no God, when earth is without Him and heaven is blank of Him, when you cannot refresh your panting soul with prayer—when it is just you, you alone, in a fatherless world, with all mankind against you—to stand defiant, rebuked of all men, alone, alone, unaided, no Unseen Friend in the silence of the night or the glare of the battling day ?—just because you believe what you have to say is true and is for the helping of men—surely that is a heroism before which our criticisms may well be hushed.

And we who know how to help us to keep our hearts from bitterness and to guard our lips from sharpness, all the blessed help of our daily prayer, of turning again and again to God, our Father, is not too much ; how even so again and again we fail even in the common affairs of life—surely we should be very, very slow to condemn our brother who is without that Shepherd or knows Him not, without that rod and staff to comfort him, without the music of that blessed faith : “ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”

And so if it sometimes happened that the word of Charles Bradlaugh smote as a two-edged sword, if now and again the fierceness and passion of his rejoinder to men who taunted him was terrible to see—and I have seen him in the torrent of his words shaking his opponent like a wild beast shaking the life out of an antelope or kid—why, who shall cast the first stone ? Are we who have God never passionate ? And how should mortal

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man—without that guarding presence—not sometimes be carried in the whirlwind of his indignation to excess of language and violence of denunciation ?

Charles Bradlaugh was a heretic all round. He was made that way. Many of his heresies I share ; from others I turn away, since he disbelieved in doctrines which command all my intellect and my affections. But he was true to the convictions which he reached ; true with a fidelity which shames ninety-nine out of every hundred of us all.

Politically he was a tremendous Radical. In spite of waves and periods of reaction the English world is slowly, surely moving towards the acceptance of most of these Radicalisms of his. Socially he held views honestly and earnestly, some of which I personally think tended towards the subversion of society and the loosening of the bonds of morality. But he held his views conscientiously and believed them to be for the good of mankind ; and he suffered cruelly under the gross and false, the unscrupulous and reckless misrepresentations of his views which were generally current. Religiously he was an atheist. I hold Theism, as opposed to atheism, to be the fundamental truth of the universe, the one ultimate bond of all truth, morality, and religion. But I would rather have the earnest and reasoned atheism of this man than the loose and conventional Christianity of that Conservative colleague of his in the House of Commons, who said to him lightly, "Why, Bradlaugh, what in the world does it matter whether there is a God or not ?" And I hold that if one of those two men

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is to be called an infidel—unfaithful—that man is not Charles Bradlaugh.

It is needless for me to speak of that great constitutional struggle in which he engaged when the British House of Commons refused to excuse him from the oath and then refused to let him take it, and by which chiefly his name is secure of a place in history. As a representative of the people in what should be the people's House he was ever on the side of justice, an opponent of oppression, a determined advocate of the rights of weak and unfriended peoples. "He took up," says his biographer, "the cause of India as he had done those of Italy, Poland, Ireland, of Boers, Zulus, and Egyptians, with no thought or prospect of personal gain, out of sheer zeal for justice and hatred of oppression." Royal favour never conferred on any man a more honourable title than that which was accorded in popular parlance to him, "The honourable member for India." Not for nothing did a leading Irish Nationalist declare to him once on the floor of the House, "Mr. Bradlaugh, you have been the best Christian of us all."

I met him in debate at Nottingham when he was forty-five years of age. He had lectured a little while previously in the town on Max Müller's Hibbert Lectures. I had ventured a few words of criticism on his address. The result was a challenge to debate, which challenge was earnestly and courteously pressed upon me by the local Secularist society. After some hesitation and consultation of friends I accepted the challenge. And on the

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evenings of the 5th and 6th of September, 1878, we met in the Co-operative Hall, which was densely crowded with an audience in which his friends and mine were fairly mingled. The subject was, "Is it Reasonable to Worship God?"—a subject selected by me that I might lay the stress on personal and practical religion rather than on vague and vain metaphysical word-spinnings either for or against the abstract belief in the existence of Deity. In every respect Mr. Bradlaugh treated me with a perfect and generous courtesy. He was of course not only a man of the rarest platform power, but also a most practised debater, while I was but a novice. Accordingly he gave me such advantages in the order of proceedings as must fall to one or the other, allowing me the first word on the first night and the last on the second; and when the debate was published he invited me to supply the preface. Both of us kept our tempers perfectly, which indeed was little credit to either of us, since neither gave the other provocation. The debate was afterwards translated into Dutch by a Liberal Protestant pastor, which seemed to show that he at any rate thought the balance of its argument was in favour of faith in God. It was a deep delight to me, when a few years ago the *Life of Charles Bradlaugh* appeared, to read that though he had left London depressed by the bigotries displayed on occasion of the release of Edward Truelove from prison that morning, and in little humour for the engagement, the atmosphere cleared for him at our meeting. At the close of the first evening's discussion, he wrote or said to his daughter, "I left

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London in no mood for debating. Coldbath Fields atmosphere hung about me all day, but the debate, as far as the first night has gone, is the most pleasant one in which I have ever taken part."

In that debate Mr. Bradlaugh's line of argument was broadly the same as he adopted in many other discussions both in the spoken and in the written word. Atheism did not mean with him the actual denial of God. It meant, like Huxley's Agnosticism, the contention that we cannot know anything about a God, whether He exists or not. The plea was that men should live without God, make no reference to Him in prayer or worship, face life, seek truth, do duty apart from any conscious dependence on a Living Deity. But practically his argument always made for the definite conclusion that there is no God, for it was an attack on every argument put forward to convince men that there is.

His method consisted very largely in an invitation to his opponent to frame some metaphysical definition of Deity. And since God is, like all ultimate existences—like time, space, matter, force—indefinable in any terms more clear than the simple word itself, he was wont to get his unwary opponent into inextricable confusion, and triumphantly expose the futility of whatever definition he advanced. It was a favourite formula of Bradlaugh—one which he pressed on me again and again—that we cannot believe in that which we cannot define. To which it seems sufficient answer that every man believes in the existence of himself, yet there never was a man who could scientifically define himself. There are mysteries that are pressed in upon our consciousness,

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which are wrought into our hourly experience, which we know and cannot help knowing by direct apprehension, which nevertheless the philosophers may discuss for ever and a day before they can girdle them round with a definition.

Mr. Bradlaugh, again, contended that we cannot believe things on other men's experience, and this he pressed on me when I argued from the testimony of religious men to the reality of religious truth. Yet there is not one of us who does not every hour assume the verity of other men's experience. That the Atlantic Ocean is very wide, that Mont Blanc is very high, that the Equator is hot and the Pole is cold, that men in Australia gaze on other constellations than we, these are testimonies, experiences, which the stay-at-homes among us accept on the bare word of others, and concerning which no Bradlaugh expresses scepticism. Indeed, with all respect, I must say that his argumentative quiver was largely stocked with arrows which were mere true-sounding general formulæ—true-sounding, but capable of absolute exposure and destruction by the application of a little common sense.

No, the real strength of his case lay elsewhere. It lay in his scathing exposure of the many mean ideas of God put forth by the historic orthodoxies of the world. The great Iconoclast wielded a club that dealt shattering blows against the Jehovah who smiled on the slaughter of women and children and incited the passions of Israel against the foe, who loved human sacrifice and cared for but one people on all the face of the earth ; or against a Father who could only forgive through the oblation of his Son

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and called for blood to atone for blood ; or against a God who condemned to eternal torture all who would not pronounce the shibboleth of a worn-out creed, or shut out from his grace for ever such souls as had refused the pretended sacraments of a false and superstitious priesthood. Against all vain images of God his assault was terrible ; and young men whose reason and conscience alike responded with quick delight to denunciations such as these, were carried by the impetus he gave, away past all sane and thoughtful Theism, to that blank Atheism which to so many has proved a waste too arid to nourish the roots of their higher spiritual being.

This is no occasion to try to meet point by point the powerful criticisms which Mr. Bradlaugh, with undoubted sincerity and conviction that he was serving the cause of truth, levelled at every form of Theistic faith, at every mode of belief in God, and the spirit of prayer and trust and hope and reverence that is rooted in such belief. It is rather for us to strive briefly, in conclusion, to distinguish the great fundamental elements in human nature which make against the permanent establishment of Atheism as the creed of the human race—which indeed give us hope that the lapse of another Christian century may yield a far more living and uplifting faith in the Heavenly Father than any to which the nations have as yet attained.

Is it not enough to point to the historic fact that the mind and heart of man continually revert to faith in God after every adverse argument, as the needle, however violently deflected, the moment it regains its freedom, quivers back upon the index to

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the north? Only once in history has a mighty teacher striven to build up a civilisation in absolute alienation from all Theism. Sakya-muni, the Buddha, with heart burning with compassion for the woes of men, strove to do that thing. And behold! the Buddhists of the after centuries, however loyal to his ethics, by the compulsion of the spiritual nature in which we are wrought, reverted to prayer, to worship, to adoration, to the psalm of praise, as though the Buddha had proclaimed a Living God. Thrust out nature with a pitchfork, yet always she returns. If the element of faith be cast forth at the front door, it creeps in at the back ere many days. No steady and united forward movement of mankind has ever been made without the binding and propelling power of some faith in a higher Being than man, without the humbling of the soul before a high and holy One who evokes the great and noble passions of love and loyalty and reverence. You may dash to pieces the cobwebs of metaphysics, tear to shreds the texture of theology, but human nature refuses to proceed on its mighty march through the ages without the element of worship, of the upward look, of hands folded and head bowed down before the ineffable Mystery, the Living One, the Supreme who inhabits eternity.

It is true that the moment we begin to picture, to image forth, to describe, to define, we are plunged into anthropomorphism. We make God in our image, simply because, being men, we can only think and imagine in the terms of men. All our anthropomorphisms fall infinitely below the being of the Eternal. But because a child cannot draw

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the glorious face of a Madonna, you do not deny the existence of the grace and loveliness of womanhood. And because neither our feeble hands nor our faltering tongues can make a likeness of Him, the Ineffable, you are neither to say that He is not, nor to deny that in our measure we can know Him. We feel Him, we experience Him, the Unseen Authority who commands our conscience, the Supreme Love who whispers his consolations to our torn and bleeding hearts, the All-Holy who wakens in us ideals of goodness and beauty and purity which hush our spirits to the moods of prayer. And though you baffle us again and again in our poor and tentative definitions, you no more take our God away, than you can rob a little child of his mother by showing the inadequacy or error of his account of her nature and her being.

Charles Bradlaugh, by the high gifts of his talent, his eloquence, his culture, still more by the noble intrepidity of his contention for freedom and for justice among men, won the loyal allegiance of a great multitude of the working-men of England. But because there was nothing in his account of the universe to satisfy the religious element in man, his following fell much to pieces when the thrill of his presence was removed. And even in his life-time, to one who moved about much among his followers, as I did in the seventies and eighties, it became evident that many of them were moved more by the love of perpetual debate than by any passionate ardour at all costs to find the truth. And so I think that his name will be held in honour in the twentieth century much more for his splendid advocacy

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of political and social justice than for any contribution to the perennial problem of man's relation to a higher and holier Power.

But the atheism of Bradlaugh is pure and sweet compared to the atheism of such as, bowing the knee to God and making profession of his worship, yet bring no living love of God into their conduct of life. The men who uphold ancient wrongs, who trample on human right, who set their faces as flint against all pleadings for a larger justice and a loftier mercy, do many of them utter the shibboleths of orthodoxy and are in good repute in the churches. But the atheist Bradlaugh walks into the kingdom of heaven a league in front of these; and the "well done, good and faithful servant" greets the ear of such as he long before it reaches that of the man who, in the savour of orthodoxy, for a pretence made long prayers, or devoured the houses of widows or orphans, or gave tithe of mint and anise and cummin, neglecting the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith. It is a shame and a scandal to Christendom that if we are to name three who in this England in the nineteenth century have stood forth always and unflinchingly for truth, for righteousness, for justice, there spring to our lips among the most prominent the names of three men who profess no knowledge of God—John Stuart Mill, Charles Bradlaugh, and John Morley.

But Theism, the faith in God, the message of Christ, remains, despite the assaults of the Bradlaughs and the Holyoakes, despite even the falsity of so many who with their lips do it reverence. The

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deeper the love of *good* in the hearts of men, the stronger the cords that draw them towards the love of *God*. And whatever the attitude of the men who are without ideals, the idealists of the world—who are its salt, its savour, its saviours—are never long without the light of the love of God rising and shining in their hearts.

VIII

THE PAINTER:
GEORGE FREDERICK WATTS

VIII

THE PAINTER : GEORGE FREDERICK WATTS

WE turn now to "the Painter" as a "Maker of the Century," and we are confronted at once, as in the cases of the novelist and the dramatist, with the perennial question of the function of art. We have seen that the writer of romances and the writer of dramas rise to the highest expression and power in their art when they make it the minister and messenger of great ethical and spiritual truths. In their case, at any rate, there is no beauty and glory of art which is not touched to a still finer beauty and glory if there be something of the glow of the prophet at the artist's heart, and he wish not only to please, but to teach and to lead.

And I believe that with the musician and the painter it is not otherwise. Concerning music and musicians I have not the knowledge or the skill to speak. But this I will venture : music, or what passes as such, may either simply amuse and please ; or it may nobly elevate and refine, quickening in the heart sentiments of reverence, of aspiration, or of spiritual love ; or it may degrade, inviting the

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fancy to images sensuous and relaxing, or simply fanning the popular passions of the moment. The whole range from the pure and sublime to the gross and the base may find expression in terms of the scale and the chord, and there are to be found in the ranks of the musicians alike the seer of divine visions and the seducer of the soul from purity.

And that is so with the Painter no less. This art of tracing forms and mixing colours gives marvellous variety of power of expression. There is at the centre the vast range of paintings which serve simply to please. Some of these indeed, if pure, are fraught with a wonderful beauty, and beauty itself is holy. Take the exquisite harmonies of the late Albert Moore. They had no pretension whatever to teach or to inspire. But in their graceful outlines and lovely harmonies of colour they were a pure delight. And for such pleasures we may well have grateful memories. But then, up above these pictures of mere and sheer beauty, and down below them too, there are pictures of very different qualities. Painting can corrupt as well as purify. There are schools of painters who, under the specious plea of "Art for art's sake," and with no sense of the responsibility which is inseparable from every talent, tamper with the imagination and waken the lower elements of feeling to quick life. It is astonishing how the picture is a mirror to the artist's mind, revealing to the spectator of his canvases how noble or how base he is. None perhaps could say just wherein the difference of treatment lies. But it is there, and the man stands revealed behind it. The great sculptor, Power,

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gives us that statue of the Greek Slave—which was famous in the middle of the century—absolutely pure in every curve of the beautiful limbs; and it is impossible to conceive its waking an evil thought. Watts gives us the young figure of Life, climbing the steep stairway of time, undraped in her pure simplicity, and the mind is only touched to sympathy and reverence. But there are men of the French school whose studies of the nude, though observing all the conventionalities of art, leave a stain upon the imagination. It is because of the contrast in inward character and intention between the artists.

But in the hands of the worthy the painter's art has wonderful elevating power. Even landscape may become a very psalm of praise, a hymn of harmony between earth and heaven. I remember a memorial exhibition of the pictures of Alfred Hunt three or four years ago—views mostly of quiet scenery in England and in Wales. Thousands of skilful hands have painted the same familiar scenes, Whitby and Durham, Capel Curig and Moel Siabod, and many of them with as much faithfulness and accuracy as Hunt. But while they for the most part tell only of grassy slopes and rugged rocks, of arms of the sea and clouded skies, under his touch these all are messengers of the unseen. He was of an intense religious sensibility. All the message of Ruskin had sunk deep into his soul. He "regarded," says his biographer, "all the mighty and beautiful phenomena of nature as manifestations of the divine." He painted not with senses and brain alone, but also with the soul. And so to visit that exhibition where his modest pictures hung round

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the walls was like visiting a beautiful village church, with solemn music sobbing and sighing through the nave ; one felt that it was a holy place ; and one came away feeling that one had been in touch with God. It was hill and stream and sea and sky ; but it was hill and stream and sea and sky with God speaking through them all.

But doubtless it is in figure-painting that the message of higher things can be made most direct, can best be understood of the people. All the emotions of humanity can there be visibly set forth, and spirits higher than the spirit of man can be clothed by genius in symbolic figures, and set to speak to the human soul.

And it is in this lofty and ideal art that George Frederick Watts stands forth the supreme prophet-painter of the century.

Born as far back as 1817—two years after Waterloo—this famous artist is still in our midst. Two or three years ago—when he was already eighty years of age—he held out his right arm for me to see, that I might note how regular was the pulse, how firm and steady the hand and gifted fingers ; and he told me how it was his habit always in the summer to be at his easel at four o'clock in the morning, when the holy stillness of a new and virgin day was in the air. A beautiful old man—in the velvet cap and the ruffles at the wrist just a touch of the more picturesque costume of an earlier time ; but the man transcending the dress, with the white hair and beard and the shapely form, and the fine-cut features, and the mingling benevolence and thoughtfulness speaking from eyes and lips—one to

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be with whom for a little while, and to hear his simple talk about the pictures which one after another he showed me in his great octagonal gallery, was in itself a consecration and a benediction.

And for more than sixty years he has never swerved from his high purpose—to make his art talk to men of what is beautiful and true and good, so that they may be kindled to the love of these things and the longing for them in their own hearts ; to speak to them, too, very plainly of what is ugly and false and evil, but always in such a way as to give these things no glamour of attraction, to feed no prurient curiosity, but to draw men away from them, revealing to them how foul are the greed and the lust lurking in the heart. For sixty years he has painted his parables. For far the greater portion of that time he has never painted for pecuniary profit, never taken a subject which should have nothing to teach—even in portraits only painted the faces of the great, or wise, or good ; and most that he has painted he has given to the nation, or to cities that seemed to him to deserve them, such as happy Manchester. And so his lessons have sunk into the hearts of them who are of an understanding spirit, and they will abide like great and good books for us all to read long after the few short years that alone can still remain to him on earth.

George Frederick Watts heard long ago God speaking to him in his studio. The word of the Lord came unto him as truly as to any prophet in the Hebrew Canon. Modest, retiring, diffident, dreading display, shrinking from publicity, he has yet never dared to say, with hesitating Jeremiah,

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"Ah, Lord God, behold I cannot speak, for I am a child"; but on his tomb, when he too shall be called on to pay his fearless tribute at "the Court of Death," we may well engrave as epitaph the brave, strong words of Ezekiel in the vision of the valley of dry bones, "So I prophesied as I was commanded."

I am so happy as to posssss two letters from Mr. Watts dwelling on the true function of the artist. In the earlier one, dated 1888, he says: "I do not presume to be a teacher, but I do endeavour and hope to give my work some power to suggest reflections. It is an encouragement to me to find serious minds feeling with me that this is as much the artist's mission as the poet's." In the second, under date 1897, he says: "I do consider art should take its place with the most solemn utterances of poetry and literature. But [it is] too often wanting in what appears to me to be of the deepest significance. I want our poets especially to stand by the side of the great Hebrew prophets in denouncing and encouraging. This has been my desire in my feeble way."

So he prophesied as he was commanded.

Let us glance at three or four of these great prophecies by oil and pigment, and try to interpret the visions set before us by the seer.

Here is "The Minotaur." It is a marble parapet of Greek device on the face of a high cliff looking out over the deep blue sea. And over the corner of the parapet gazing seawards leans that mythologic figure, half human, half bovine, seeking if there be sign there of any victim drifting Creteward whom

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he may devour. This Minotaur, as drawn by Watts, is no patch-work with head of man and limbs of ox. Rather the whole gross personality is wholly both, human, yet altogether brute-human, ox-formed yet with brute lusts quickened by man's intelligence. It is the incarnation of the "sheer delight of cruelty." In his clawed hand the beast crushes a little bird in empty wantonness. The spectator must indeed be dull who does not turn away with a new throb of hatred for all base passions which brutalise mankind.

And here is "Mammon." It is a man stout and full-blooded, past the meridian of life, the figure robed in brocade of gold and purple, the face with its brute strength lined with cruelty, avarice, and insolence, ass's ears pricking above the head, one heavy fist pressed on the nape of the neck of a woman whose head is crushed down on his knee, one foot resting heavily on the prone form of a young man lying in the dust—the other hand grasping a bag of gold.

No young Englishman wavering between the service of God and Mammon could look on that awful picture and not feel a rush of longing to purify himself from the Mammon-worship and turn to the God of purity and truth and love.

These things then—the hatefulness of cruelty and greed—our painter received command from God to prophesy,—and he has prophesied as he was commanded with all the rugged faithfulness of a Hosea or a John the Baptist.

But sweeter, happier messages than these have been whispered in his ear by the Holy Spirit, and these

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also, with manifest delight and joy in his high commission, he has declared to us in symbolized figure.

Chief of all, I think, it is a new reading of the relation of death and love that has worked as a gospel in his heart and moved him to declare it in a series of pictures in which he touches his very highest point of achievement.

Let me try to expound this doctrine from four pictures, all very great. They are "The Court of Death," "Death crowning Innocence," "Love and Death," and "Love and Life."

"The Court of Death" is a canvas thirteen feet high and nine feet wide. Central sits throned the winged figure of Death—a woman, folding on her knee a baby child. On either side stand female figures guarding the unknown territory that lies behind and beyond the Sovereign Death. And from every side troop mortals to render up their tribute to the universal queen. Here is the soldier in the pride of youthful strength, laying his sword upon her footstool. Here is the noble laying his coronet at her feet. Here the cripple, quietly glad at his emancipation. Here a worn and weary girl lays her head softly against the kindly form of Death. And a chubby, laughing little boy plays hide-and-seek in the winding-sheet, passing without a pang to the land beyond; while a lion tamed and gentle lays his head at the feet of the all-compelling queen. And he who beholds hears the whisper in his heart that, after all, Death is the great Atoner, the Comforter, the Healer, the Physician who allays the sorrows and pains of men.

In the famous picture of "Love and Death," it is

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the threshold of the House of Life,—and Love, a winged boy, stands there striving to guard the way. But the draped figure of Death, with face averted, presses gently forward, with arm stretched forth above the boy's curly head. Love's wings are crushed against the lintel, and the petals are falling from the roses that deck the porch. Love cannot thrust back this mysterious, conquering force. But all the while, by some magic of art and inspiration, that figure of Death is declaring its own benignity. As you gaze on the unequal contest, irresistibly you feel that the defeat of Love will be Love's own triumph, and that that dread decree of mortality only means a new life for Love in a purer and more tender sphere. The miracle of this marvellous painting is in the eloquence of its gentleness, its proclamation of a higher and holier love, its presentation of that High Power to which we must all in our turn submit, as a Friend, a Helper, a Consoler, an Uplifter—and that all expressed in the pose of the grey and silent figure, with face unseen, pressing resistless through the doorway where Love stands sentinel in vain.

I had always doubted whether this or the smaller painting, "Death crowning Innocence," was Watts's most beautiful picture, until in an exhibition in London I saw them hanging almost side by side. Then, after long and earnest gazing, it seemed to me that the verdict, wonderful as is "Love and Death," must be for the smaller picture.

It is an angel figure, sitting with beautiful dark wings curving over the bent head,—again the figure of a woman, the seat low, so that the knees are

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gathered a little up, making a warm nest of the lap. And on that lap a baby-form fondled with an infinite tenderness by the gentle hands. Oh ! the pity and the kindness of Death—the exquisite motherhood, the incarnate love.

Or see again the exquisite grace and goodness of the woman, Death, in "Time, Death, and Judgment." How beautiful it is, the thought of this mighty artist, as he himself draws ever nearer to the day of inevitable fate, ever gazing into the face thereof with deeper and gladder trust, and throbbing with the desire to teach us all that that mysterious passage is the crowning joy and gift of life—the moment when love will come most fully by its own, and the harmony of the being which God has given us be fullest, strongest and most lovely ! I cannot imagine one who has understood the message of these incomparable pictures ever being afraid to die. Rather does the promise of that high moment of the soul's experience fling back a radiance over all the struggles and sorrows of life, and consecrate us all with the sureness of the triumph of love under the guiding hand of God.

For Watts's reverence for Death is only the recognition that Death is, after all, no despot queen, but in truth the handmaid of the eternal and all-encompassing Love. Death is the nurse ; but Love the mother. And in the last of the four pictures I have named it is made clear—how Love is in the end the true and unfailing guide.

For in "Love and Life" the highest lesson of all is taught. Life is a fragile woman painfully toiling up the steep. She would faint and fall on the stony

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stairway, were it not for the radiant winged figure of Love, a young man brave and stalwart, who turns to her with helpful hand from the height above, and so leads her gently up the rude and rugged path. The Love that Death could conquer in the other picture, was but a child not knowing the things that make for the soul's true peace. Love here is a man, stalwart and wise. *His* wings are crushed against no lintel-post. No drooping roses drop their petals where he treads. He is leader, master, in the storm and stress by which trembling Life is beset. And in his strength Life is able to mount the giddy height, no fear of Death threatening her on her way.

Walt Whitman, in his strange and rugged verse, has nobly sung the theme of the fearlessness of Death. But I think that our English prophet-painter has declared it in language much more clearly to be understood of the people. He paints no illusions, never pretends that there are not sorrow and pain and struggle and darkness in human life. He knows that *untutored* Love fears death and would fain banish it from the story of the world. But he sees and knows that *tutored* Love will ever recognise that the order of life and death and life again is God's own holy law, and that, through it all, Love's kingdom ever comes, and God's way is full of gentle sympathy with the longings of the human heart.

This message of the kindliness of death will perhaps find a more open way to the hearts of the elderly than to those of the young. But our prophet has prophecies for those on the threshold of life as well, and they are inspiring in their noble strength.

For he would fill the young man with a sense of

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the splendour of his opportunities, the adequacy of his powers. Be pure, be steadfast, be brave, he seems to say, and your success is assured—success not indeed in self-aggrandisement, but in priceless service to the world. Look at his “Sir Galahad,” a figure in the first glory of manly youth, his armour undinted upon his breast and limbs, his arm leaning on his horse’s neck, his face aglow with strength and hope and purpose. To him the world is a field for highest chivalry ; and all that he has and is he is eager to devote to the service of that which is good. Or come with me to the stable at the rear of Little Holland House, observe the little tram-line running from the stable to the courtyard outside, and see the colossal equestrian statue, wheeled on its stand out into the open under the blue June sky—a work which for many a long year the artist has been slowly building. His heart and conscience are in that titanic sculptured group. He hints that it is on this he would rest his fame. The splendid steed champing at the bit, with curved and stately neck and limbs in which the mighty muscles swell, is held in check, mastered, controlled, by the youth who sits astride his back. The horse represents all the difficulties of life which a noble courage has overcome and subdued to be but as a servant to the great purposes yet to be achieved. And the athlete who has tamed him leans back in his seat, holding the bridle short and firm in the right hand, with the left shielding his eyes from the sun, that he may gaze undazzled on the difficulties yet to be faced and conquered. It is a glorious group in conception and execution ; and the wine of a new manhood flows

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into the veins of the beholder as he takes in the mighty lines and harmonies of this marble symbol of the greatness which true manhood may achieve.

Let us turn, lastly, to that picture which Watts labels "*Sic transit gloria mundi*"—"Thus passeth the glory of the world." He led me up to it and told me how this was to him chief among his pictures, because it taught the lesson which to him seemed greatest and deepest of all truths in human life. It is a warrior dead and stretched upon the bier. The form is covered with a shroud—a picture to hush, perhaps to sadden, with its sombre tints. On the floor and about the bed are scattered—useless—all the things that had seemed of most interest in life, the musical instruments which had wakened pleasure, the books that had stood for knowledge and for learning, the shield that had befriended him in many a doughty fight, the laurel wreath which had recorded success and fame. These all, what are they now? Ah, what are those words brodered on the curtain that hangs behind the couch? "What I spent, I had; what I saved, I lost; what I gave, I have." There is the lesson, so simple, so paradoxical, so profoundly true. What he had spent, this brave fighter, that he had had: all the good and joy of possession had lain in the act and effort of expending; only in devoting it to service had there been delight in the vigour of his youth, in the manly strength of his maturer years. What he had saved, he had lost: all that he had gathered for himself, the riches, the learning, the pleasures, the fame, they were nothing, had been nothing just so long and so far as he used them for

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himself. What he had given, that he still possessed—the love, the service, the gifts of kindness and generosity, the care for others, the enthusiasms for the good, the true—these, because he had given them, given them lavishly, keeping nothing for himself, are all still his now and for ever. And as I left the house the old man told me once again, in simplest phrase, how for himself he had no ambition, did not care at all for fame, only in giving, bestowing, serving, helping, found any happiness or any rest.

Truly when finally he lays down his brush, leaving to his nation all that he wrought, all those glorious canvases with lessons of life and truth painted so wonderfully into them, every picture the testimony of a soul bright with the light of God and burning with its prophetic message for his fellow-men, he being dead yet shall speak, and his inspiration shall pass into many lives, and the twentieth century with its impenetrable secrets he will help to “make,” no less than the century which saw the birth and maturity of his rare and glorious powers.

IX

THE PATRIOT: JOSEPH MAZZINI

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TO have passed a few days even in such companionship as books can give with Joseph Mazzini is to have been baptised with fire ; for base and poor indeed would be the soul that should not catch from him the glow of the noblest passions that can burn in the human breast—the passions of freedom, of justice, of self-sacrifice, of patriotism, of the love of man, of the love of God.

One and all these burned and glowed again in the bosom of him, the hunted exile, the dauntless emancipator, with a flame which no agony could extinguish, as he passed through the dramatic experiences of his sublime career, with varying fortune, but with conviction and purpose that never varied and never for an instant swerved. The nineteenth century saw many great and notable patriots—thank God ! not the least of them here in our England. But supreme among them all for the height, the fervour, the wisdom, the devotion, the idealism, the religion of his patriotism will stand in the eye of history this Joseph Mazzini, son of the

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Genoese physician, born into the world when that century was not yet five years old.

Of great physical delicacy, reared in the fastidious little aristocracy of a provincial capital, there seemed little in the boy's antecedents to promise the man that was to be. There was, however, it is said, a thousand years of unadulterated republicanism in his veins. At twenty-six the young law student was already an exile from his native land. Already he had passed six months a prisoner in a cell high up in the tower of Savona, the sea, the sky, the Alps the daily preachers to him through his window-bars; and here the burden of his prophecy was borne in upon his soul. At twenty-six his name suddenly rang through all Italy. For he had written to the young King, Charles Albert, his famous letter of appeal to identify himself with the loftiest and most ideal destinies of Italy.

Every young Englishman ought to acquaint himself with the stirring story of this man's life. Behold him on the threshold of manhood: hair black and flowing, complexion that pale Italian olive which seems to harmonise so well with the olive-groves of the country-side, high forehead and features delicately cut, deep-set eyes which, we are told, "could smile as only Italian eyes can smile, but could also flash astral infinitudes of scorn." He who looked with discerning eye would see in that fragile figure and rare mould of countenance the promise of a will which should achieve those conquests beyond every material triumph which are the miracles which it is only given to faith to bring to pass.

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We must glance but at a scene here and there in the life-drama of the man, and then hasten on to the gospel which he taught—a gospel in which religion and politics, faith and policy, principle and practice, were fused into one brilliant and consummate unity.

Here he is an exile in London, pawning his coat and his boots for bread, yet collecting together in school the little Italian hurdy-gurdy boys and monkey-keepers, and learning to know the Italian working-men of London.

And here he is when victory, success, and triumph seem at last to be his lot—chief of the installed triumvirate at Rome, commandant of the Eternal City, ancient mother of freedom so long enslaved under tyrant priests—master of Rome, sanguine that thence shall spread out the unity and liberty of Italy, till there be but one people in one commonwealth, servants of one God. And the cunning adventurer of France, the basest of the Napoleons, sends his troops with fair words on the one hand to Mazzini, and fair words on the other to the Pope, under Ferdinand de Lesseps—afterwards of canal engineering fame. And Lesseps, who has orders to negotiate with the Legislative Assembly only and not with the Triumvirate, nevertheless creeps one night stealthily past the sleeping guards and through the open doors and corridors of Mazzini's palace, till he comes upon the patriot asleep in a little room on a narrow iron bedstead, and he gazes awe-stricken on that beautiful, unconscious face, till the patriot awakes and calmly asks, "Hast thou come to assassinate me?"—and then in the dead of the

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night—the two—the representative of humanity and duty and God, and the representative of ambition and cunning and greed—alone talk over the problem of Rome and Italy, of Church and King and people.

And then soon afterwards : the French masters of Rome, the mask thrown off, the republic crushed the Triumvirate deposed, Mazzini wandering, dazed, distracted, as one in a dream, about the streets of Rome.

And then, in 1872, almost contemporaneously with that march of Victor Emmanuel with the flag of Italy to the Capitol of Rome, which completed Italian unity, Mazzini, alone and unsatisfied because with the unity there was not perfect freedom, preaching with his dying breath that men should live not for the material, but for the ideal, hard by the leaning tower of Pisa, bowed his sorrowing head and died. And just one day too late there came and was laid at his dead feet the noble poem of his English friend and singer, Harriet Eleanor Hamilton King, whom long ago he had bid to sing the cause of Italian unity ; and she wrote at last of his disciples, not of him, saying :

“I write of the Disciples, because He
Who was their Master, having left on earth
The memory of a face that none could paint,
The echo of a voice that none could reach,
Hath left his own immortal words and works
To be a witness for him. Who should dare
To add one line or lesson unto these ?

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Joseph Mazzini, Master, first of those
The Sons of Men who are the Sons of God !

Who walked alone with God, and had no Higher
Of humankind to be a help to him."

What, then, was the gospel, the message, the purpose, the ideal, what were "the immortal words and works" of this man, that he left so profound an impression on the consciences and hearts of such as came under his magnetic influence ?

Here was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Like Him of whom he most reminds us, he was without a home, without the solace of domestic love, and alone he fought and taught through the tragic years on the face of the cruel earth. "He who, from some fatality of position, has been unable to live the calm life of the family, sheltered beneath this angel's wing, has a shadow of sadness cast over his soul, and a void in his heart which nought can fill, as I who write these pages for you know." These words we find in the chapter on Duties towards the Family in his supreme essay, "The Duties of Man." Alone he lived, alone he died, so far as concerns the most intimate communion of the heart. And his life was spent in prisons or in exiles, in plots and insurrections or in sudden revolutions. He was one who believed that there comes a time when the sabre is the only argument ; and the sublime altitude of the ideals which possessed him often found expression in the agonies of the field of battle. For he held human freedom a yet more holy and inviolable thing than human life. Yet not the sword, but the pen, was

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his keenest and most potent weapon. And he has left behind him writings which touch the very life-spring of duty and humanity, which set forth what we are here to do and to be and to serve, as no other writings of his century at any rate have set them forth. The suffering Messiah was he of the nineteenth century, bruised and buffeted for our transgressions. The weight of the iniquity of many was upon him, and with his stripes a multitude were healed. "Severe and exacting as a stoic towards himself," so one describes him who held him in highest reverence; "gentle and compassionate as a woman towards others; beautiful, not merely in regularity of feature and proportion of form, but in the varying expression of his lustrous eyes, and the ineffable sweetness of his smile," possessing an unspeakable charm which radiated on all who came within his influence.

And his gospel? It is set forth more at length and in order in his "Duties of Man" than in all his other writings. And no young man should enter this twentieth century, with its blessed hopes and its awful fears, its tremendous impending struggle between the love of good and the love of ease, allegiance to God and allegiance to gold, without taking the teaching of that noble appeal for the instruction of his head and the consecration of his heart.

"The Duties of Man." The famous reformers hitherto had declaimed on the Rights of Man—the Right to freedom, the Right to the means of happiness, the Right to equal opportunity. And those Rights meet with a response in the minds and

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consciences of all just men. And great social and political and national revolutions had been carried through in their behalf, immediately before and during the life of Joseph Mazzini. But when that dauntless exile—a man approaching forty—in the inhospitable hospitality of London looked out upon the peoples, chiefly on the working-classes, and most of all on his own Italian countrymen, he knew that the doctrine he was called by God to preach was—not the Rights of Man, but the Duties of Man. Both are real. Both are holy. Both in a well-ordered State must be inviolate. But when you call on men to claim their rights, it is not the noblest in them that you evoke. You may unchain their selfish passions, their egoism, their temper of violence and hate. But when you call on them to discharge their duty, you appeal to the unselfish in them, the spirit of self-sacrifice, the noblest, the ideal. And it is by these and by these alone that the highest life of the world is carried forward.

You say that the people will not respond to such an appeal? Ah, but hear how the words of this nineteenth century patriot-prophet ring out!

“Working men! brothers,” he cries: “When Christ came and changed the face of the world, he spoke not of rights to the rich, who needed not to achieve them; nor to the poor, who would doubtless have abused them in imitation of the rich; he spoke not of utility, nor of interest to a people whom interest and utility had corrupted: he spoke of Duty, of Love, of Sacrifice, of Faith; and he said that they should be first among all who had contributed most by their labour to the good of all.

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And the words of Christ, breathed in the ear of a society in which all true life was extinct, recalled it to existence, conquered the millions, conquered the world, and caused the extinction of the human race to ascend one degree on the scale of progress."

And in the patriot appeal which Mazzini made to Young Italy to break the chains which bound the people of Piedmont, of Venice, of Naples, of Sicily, of Rome, it was ever the appeal to the call of Duty that he voiced; and lo! he gathered round him disciples of a devotion so lofty and unswerving as the world has rarely seen—the brave, the generous, the rich, the cultured, giving their lives with joy to the cause. If he had preached not Duty, the ideal, but Rights, the so-called practical, Italy to this day would have been under the heels of the Ferdinands and the Bombas, the Popes of the Vatican and the Despots of the Palace.

Duty: and what in the mind of Mazzini was the source and fountain of Duty?

God. God exists. That was his dogma, his beginning, his foundation principle, his underlying truth. God exists. To deny it, he said, is to be mad; to try to prove it, is to blaspheme. Truly he was a dogmatist; a dogmatist of the nobler and grander sort, one whose soul is held and possessed by an overmastering conviction, from which he cannot escape, and who simply declares that conviction as hewn from the rock of eternal truth, trusting to its intrinsic power to command the assent of men.

God exists, taught Mazzini. We know Him in nature, we see Him in the order and the

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grandeur of nature, we detect Him in the evolution of human history. We do not infer Him, we do not argue Him, we do not accept Him on the authority of Church or Book, of Philosopher or Priest. We experience Him : and He cannot be taken away.

Here again Mazzini parts company with many reformers, true lovers of the people, but in whose work, because they did not know God, there was a flaw, a weakness that ultimately told. When men strive to build up reform without God, without worship, so he pointed out, soon the people revert by a necessity of their being to some substitute for God, some new form of worship. And so the French Revolution furnishes us with a goddess of Reason or a goddess of Nature.

God exists then, and Duty flows from God. Here was his second great and firm-fixed dogma, wrought into his very nature, a necessary constituent of his thought, so that he neither felt on the one hand any necessity laid on him to prove it, nor on the other hand hesitated to proclaim it as an evident and self-revealing truth in the ultimate constitution of things. God exists, and human Duty flows from God.

Duty, then, the principle of life, not Rights ; and Duty the offspring of God. Let us hear his words to the working-people once again :—

The “principle is Duty. We must convince men that they are all sons of one sole God, and bound to fulfil and execute one sole law here on earth : that each of them is bound to live, not for himself, but for others ; that the aim of existence is not to be

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more or less happy, but to make themselves and others more virtuous ; that to struggle against injustice and error, wherever they exist, in the name and for the benefit of their brothers, is not only a *right* but a Duty : a duty which may not be neglected without sin, the duty of their whole life."

Yes, God—God and Duty : these are the supreme facts of the universe. And it is that appeal alone which can carry revolutions to their highest consummation, can stir the people to their most sublime activity.

"The cry," he proclaims, "which has resounded in all great and noble revolutions, the 'God wills it, God wills it !' of the Crusades, will alone have power to arouse the inert to action, to give courage to the timid, the enthusiasm of sacrifice to the calculating, and faith to those who distrust or reject all merely human ideas. . . . Without God you may compel, but not persuade ; you may become tyrants in your turn ; you cannot be educators or apostles."

And so during that brief and wonderful triumvirate of the Republic of Rome, the motto he gave, the rallying cry he proclaimed was "God and the People." For, said he, "the Peoples have no Master but God, no Ruler but his law."

And Duty, this Law of Life, wherein does it consist ? Mazzini is distinguished, as we have seen, from many reformers, first, in that he proclaimed Duties, not Rights ; secondly, in that he neither denied nor ignored God, but made Him the source and fountain of human duty. His third distinction from other reformers lay in the division he

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made of duty and the order in which he ranged its parts.

There are three great spheres of Duty, so taught the patriot—Mankind, your Country, and your Family. And the first in importance of your duties, the first too in logic, though not in time, is your duty to Mankind, to Humanity at large. For that springs from the primal fact that you are children of God, and therefore brothers—with all the duties of brothers—to each other over all the earth. Nor can you ever realise your own manhood, till you realise your brotherhood with the whole race. If you shut out any part of the human race from your sympathies—whether they be of Europe or of Asia or of Africa, whether they be white or black, whether they be rich and great or poor and oppressed, whether they be of yesterday, of to-day, or of to-morrow—you warp and starve a part of your own being, as though you bound a ligature about a limb so tightly that the blood from your heart could not flow through its veins.

“You are all soldiers in one army,” cried Mazzini. “In whatsoever land you live, wheresoever there arises a man to combat for the right, the just, and the true, that man is your brother. Wheresoever a man is tortured through error, injustice, or tyranny, that man is your brother. Free men or slaves, you are all brothers.” Then serve Humanity. Feel the throb of universal kin in your every pulse-beat. Say not you are too weak. In every act in the circle of the family or the country, ask yourself, “If all men did thus everywhere, would it be for the benefit of Humanity?” Strive

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not to serve household or nation at the cost of mankind. Such service is always vain and must recoil in suffering on the very people you would serve.

And next to Humanity, our Country. Yes, he, the mightiest Patriot of the nineteenth century, the very prophet and seer of patriotism, who gave it a glow it had in no other heart, set patriotism midway, between the love of all mankind and the love of the dear ones of the home. It was not to him the first, but the second element in virtue.

You are men, said he, before you are citizens or fathers.

Yet humanity is so wide ; the speech, the manners, the thoughts of the peoples are so diverse. You need comrades whom you understand and who understand you, so that you can act with them ; and so God has divided men into races, set them down in nationalities, given them countries bounded by wide seas or great mountain-ranges, so that they have each a life of their own other than the life of the rest of mankind. And this is one of the sacred facts of nature, in the ground-plan of creation, which a monarch or a people does ill wantonly or from lust of conquest to destroy.

And each country, with its circumstances, its traditions, its character, acquires a mission different from that of any other. You, the individual man, are to incarnate your country in yourself, to help on her mission, to take into your own life all that is best in her soul, to infuse into her all that in your own soul is best and truest. So will God's work be done in the world. You must strive that your people be free ; and help them to use their freedom for the noblest purposes.

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And, thirdly, the duty in the Family. "The Family is the Heart's Fatherland." Do not make the mistake of thinking you do well by the family if you teach them to prosper, if you limit your aims to their culture, their wealth, their comfort, even their purity and loveliness of character. No, you must teach them that the household is a unit in the nation, as the nation is a unit in mankind. "Speak to your children," says Mazzini to the fathers amongst us, "of your country ; of what she was, and is, and ought to be. Repeat to them the names and deeds of the good men who have loved their country and the people, and who have striven, amid sorrows, calumny, and persecution, to elevate their destiny. Instil into their young hearts the strength to resist injustice and oppression." None is true father or mother who does not bring up the young to feel that they are not isolated, that they are not a little group alone, but bound by innumerable cords of sympathy and affection to the myriads outside, to the dear mother-land, their larger home, and to the vast brotherhood of humanity, the family of the universal Father, God.

Such is the main teaching on the greatest themes of the great Italian patriot. Such are the convictions, the sentiments, in which he lived and died, the inspiration of that great evangel which was his special message to Italy, to Europe, to the world. That special message, which he held as a commission direct from God, was the unification of Italy—that "Italy" should cease to be a mere geographical expression, and become a living organism, a servant of God among the nations of the world.

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For his part he longed that it should be as a Republic that the redemption should come to the people who trod the soil and in whose veins ran the blood of Rome. But the unity came before the form of government. A monarchy limited and constitutional if it must be, though for his part his formula, "God and the People," left no room for kings or princes. But that they should be one people, feeling a common throb of race and country, that was the sacred dream for which he suffered life-long martyrdom and endured a hundred deaths. And he lived to see it, though not in the form of his desire. Three other names stand beside his in that achievement : Garibaldi, Cavour, Victor Emmanuel. But Mazzini was the seer, the prophet, of a courage dauntless as the soldier, a wisdom outstripping far the statesman, a royalty of natural endowment out-towering further still the king.

Ah ! that this dawning century had Mazzinis manifest before us all. Young men and women, who have the century in your hands, believe me, life for you can have no dignity, no sterling worth and weight, unless you largen your minds and consciences, your imagination and desires, to those wider fields which were the zone of his prayers and strivings. Unless you can shake off the selfishness, outgrow the littleness, which make your own ease or pleasure or money-getting the boundaries of your active interest and zeal, unless you can rise up into the spirit of the nobler patriotism and the passion for human good, your lives will be small and barren, and with mean and wizened souls at last you will present yourselves at the bar of God.

X

*THE MONARCH: QUEEN
VICTORIA*

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girl playing in Kensington Gardens or on Ramsgate sands, as the young bride in the first rapture of a most human love, as the young mother hearing her little ones say their prayers, as the widow weeping with tears unquenchable, as the grave and gracious mother of her people, sympathising in their joys, sorrowing in their sorrows ; as the aged woman by a great effort of kindness striving to win over disaffected hearts in Ireland ; and then, later still, silently crying because of the pains of her soldiers and the griefs of the widows and the sad breach of peace and goodwill on earth,—and we feel : No, this was a woman, a woman like our mothers, of the same flesh and the same spirit, the same womanly mind and heart, with mingling strength and weakness in a world of mingling sunshine and shadow.

It would be easy in this hour to run through the record of that marvellous reign after the manner of the newspapers, to add one more telling of the long and dramatic story with its wealth of incident and variety of emotion. But it is not easy to find some new thing to say, some new lesson to educe.

Let us, then, be content with simply saying many things that have been said before, and drawing from them such lessons as are obvious and inevitable.

And first, surely, we must all be impressed with the fact that, however narrowly limited, however strictly constitutional the monarchy which this royal lady wielded for the great space of three-and-sixty years, she, the Monarch, has indeed been a true "Maker of the Century," on the whole second to no other. For though she herself was not, like some of her mighty predecessors, one who could

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say to her people "Ye shall" and "Ye shall not," and compel obedience to her will, though the source and fountain of political power and legislation in her day was no longer the throne but the people's own Parliament, yet such was her position in the blaze of a magnificent publicity, and such her contact with men whose influence was diffused in every direction through human society—princes, statesmen, prelates, men of genius—that her own influence flowed continuously in a thousand streams, and affected the life, not of a Court alone, but of England, of Europe, of the world. How different a place this country in which we dwell would be to-day if, instead of the woman Victoria, a succession of half a dozen Georges and Williams after the pattern of the Queen's uncles had occupied the throne of this realm these sixty years, it passes imagination to say. In all probability the throne itself would have been overturned in that great wind of revolution which swept through Europe in the middle century. Or if the throne had been maintained, the life and fame of England would have been so soiled and spoiled that men good and grave could no longer have taken any pride in their birth as Englishmen.

"I will be good." Seventy years ago those simple words broke from the lips of the little eleven-year-old maiden, who, opening her lesson-book, had found slipped into it the evidence that she was heir-presumptive to the British throne. "I will be good." It had burst on her all suddenly, that dazzling probability of queenship. And with swift intuition she perceived that that of all things

of the royal household. Behind it is the figure of a woman, whose long years in the firm grasp of a monarch's love and the strong mother making her the life and heart of the royal household, the widow weeping for her children, the great and gracious mother, the gentle sympathizing mother, the mother of the nation, as the aged woman by a great court and great nation to win over the world's heart. Behind it all, and then later still, the strong desire to the place of her soldiers and the great the world and the sad breath of peace and glory in earth—and we feel: No, this is a woman, a woman like our mothers, of the same faith and the same spirit, the same womanly mind and heart, with mingling strength and weakness, a world of mingling sunshine and shadow.

It would be easy in this hour to run through the record of that marvellous reign after the manner of the new speakers to add one more telling of the long and dramatic story with its wealth of incident and variety of emotion. But it is not easy to find some new thing to say, some new lesson to educe.

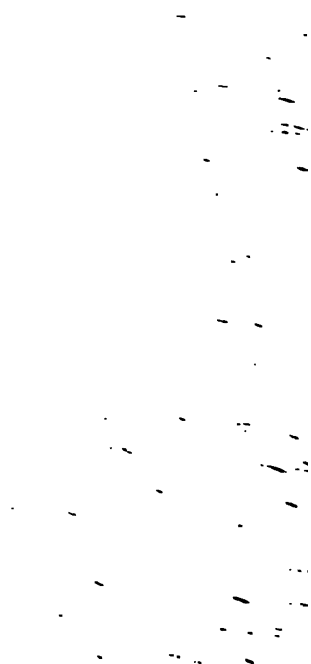
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It seems to me that the beneficent effects of her great personality lie mainly in three directions.

By the development she gave to the principles of constitutional government she greatly extended the boundaries of English freedom. By the stainless purity of her own example she brought a wholesome purification into many layers of English society. By her capacity, her industry, and her character, she raised to a higher point than it had ever reached before in England the consideration in which women at large were held. Let us glance at each of these three splendid services.

The enlargement of English freedom. Does it seem to you that that is a topic rather for the political platform than the religious pulpit? Nay, but have you reflected what human freedom means, how it is only in the measure in which the individual is left free to decide on his own course and act in his own way that character can be developed, since character is the making of right choices and the carrying out of right purposes? And you cannot find one instance in all history of national character pure and noble diffused among the people save where political institutions have been free, and the people have thus had the building up of their own conduct. Now of the kings and queens that came before Victoria in English history, some of them had been strenuous, some lax; some had played the despot to the utmost of their opportunity, some had let things drift. The monarchs that came immediately before her had been alternately violent and careless. They interfered spasmodically; they had had no well-ordered theory, and their practice

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had been without order too. Indeed, so shiftless had been their conduct, so poor a mixture of irresponsibility and spasms of the tyrant's temper, that monarchy itself had been brought into contempt, and the very throne was in danger of being overturned as an antiquated and mischievous survival. Then a young girl ascended that same throne. She held it through the great fiscal reforms of the forties, through the republican and revolutionary fever of the middle century, through the political reforms of the sixties and the seventies, and right on till the old century had worn itself away. And in her hands monarchy, from an anomaly and an anachronism and an offence to thinking men, became the pivot of a great democratic organism, the centre of an ever-evolving and developing system of self-government, the safeguard against convulsion, yet the guarantee of steady and cautious progress. The question of course still remains open whether monarchy be or be not the best and wisest form of human government ; but it is amazing how in the hands of Victoria monarchy has come to be the pledge and symbol of many of those elements of national life which it was hitherto supposed could thrive only under the flag of a republic.

And it is all because that young girl, sixty-three years ago, had in her the instincts of the statesman, and by a marvellous intuition saw that the monarch could no longer wisely play the old part, but yet had a function of unsurpassed importance to discharge. For amid the rapid changes of ministers and parliaments involved in a democratic system, it was important that there should be some constant

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element, some one who should carry on the knowledge of the inward facts of contemporary history from cabinet to cabinet, some one who should be able to take a wider than a party view, some one who, while debarred from actual personal power, should be able to advise from full stores of knowledge and continuous experience. And so Victoria became the adviser of her advisers, the counsellor of her councillors, and gave the vast stores of her ever accumulating experience and her ever ripening judgment to the service of her people—knowing that they were sovereign, bowing willingly to their sovereignty, yet serving them ever with a loyalty and allegiance of heart and mind which won, as it deserved, their heartiest loyalty and allegiance in return. And so it was that during her incomparable reign our English freedom “slowly broadened down from precedent to precedent.”

And the example of her purity. On that it is difficult to speak. She herself declared to a trusted Scottish preacher that it was from her husband that she learned what love and purity meant. But assuredly the world has never seen anything more pure and sweet than the love of those two during their too brief alliance and the gentle domesticity of their home. If we lift the veil from the English Court in the days of her immediate predecessors and then enter the drawing-rooms and boudoirs of Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle during the married life of Albert and Victoria, we shall be amazed at the moral revolution. The rot that was setting in in English society was stayed at its source. The purest and sweetest domesticity

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revealed itself at the very apex of the social pyramid. The young prince tended his wife like a woman. The young wife had no pleasure save in the love of her husband and her children. Stories of the nursery and the schoolroom that might come from any middle-class home penetrated all ranks from the royal palace. The glamour was stripped from gilded vice. The moral confusion inevitable when the language of loyalty is applied to the unworthy, and the sentiment of loyalty is demanded for princes destitute of high and noble virtues, was done away. The sentiment of loyalty and the sentiments of affection and respect were at last conjoined ; and as the years rolled by, the affection and respect deepened into love and reverence. The manners of the Court were purged ; the manners of society purified ; and a new and priceless influence for good penetrated through the circles round about the throne. We owe it in an incalculable measure to the Queen and her devoted consort that England has taken on a new respect for social purity, that vice has to a large extent been stripped of the mask of fashionable respectability, and that a wave of redeeming love and pity has gone out from the best heart of England to those who are the victims of the base passions of men, such as the world has not known before.

When Prince Albert died, and that vast sorrow took possession of the widowed heart which for well-nigh forty years held our sovereign lady in comparative retirement from social functions, the loss became manifest all too quickly. A potent restraint was removed ; and that "smart" society

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which has been one of the most dire curses of our time was evolved with deplorable rapidity. It must be one of the most earnest of our prayers in this new time that the sweet and gentle Queen Consort who now stands beside the new-made King may have strength and grace and courage to renew that olden influence for good ; so that of her also it may be recorded by some right loyal poet of the new time that "her court was pure," and from the palaces in which she rules the example of domestic love and social cleanness may descend on every circle of society in this English land.

The extension of freedom, the purification of society, these are two of the far-reaching and beneficent effects of the character of the illustrious woman whom we mourn to-day.

Thirdly, she raised to a higher point than it had ever reached before in England the consideration in which women at large were held.

And I, for my part, hold that a service to her country and the human race which cannot be surpassed.

She did this in spite of the fact that in her own mind there lingered some of the old tradition concerning the place of woman in the community. When it was suggested to her that it was not for her, a monarch, to promise in the marriage service to "obey" her husband, it is said that she refused to have the word struck out ; though another account has it that she herself doubted the propriety of such a promise from one entrusted with highest secrets of state. Nor does she seem to have risen to that highest point of view which regards the vice of man

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as a fall in the same sense in which it is so regarded in the woman. There was something of the German feeling in her regarding the relation of the sexes ; and she would have been the last to relish classification as an "emancipated" woman. Nevertheless, "emancipated" in the true and only right sense she was. Her qualities of intellect were such that she could not take opinions ready made. It was her nature to build them up for herself. And her sense of responsibility was such that she could not take duties by dictation. It was her nature to think them out for herself. And she thought out the duties of a constitutional sovereign as no one who ever lived had thought them out before. And her statesmanship, by universal testimony, was on a par with that of the great ministers of England and the Continent—Peel, Russell, Gladstone, Thiers, Bismarck, Cavour—who one by one became conspicuous during her long and splendid reign. And so when Bismarck met her he found one with whom intellect must be pitted against intellect ; and he had to revise or make exception to those false philosophisings of his in which a woman counted as but a plaything or a fool, a mischievous meddler in what she did not understand whenever she set her hand to politics.

And standing there at the head of the English nation, the acknowledged compeer of the wisest and the greatest, Victoria thus became in her own person the irrefutable argument of those who demanded for women a regard, a consideration, an opportunity, a scope from which hitherto they had been shut out. And the women who in her time

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have infused themselves with blessed result into the higher life of our country have in her their involuntary patroness. And the fame of her abides to rebuke all men who would vaunt the superiority of their sex and hold women bound within the circles of the drawing-room, the nursery, and the kitchen.

And the pricelessness of the demonstration she has made of womanly character and capacity lies most of all in this, that her masculine understanding, her virile force of will, trenched not at all on the softer and more tender attributes of womanhood ; and she has displayed on the most conspicuous stage in all the world the union in one mind and heart of the gentleness and compassion of the woman with the capacity and forcefulness hitherto supposed to be the peculiar attribute of the man. And so she has done a mighty stroke for that mutual respect and equal companionship of men and women on which depends so much of the happiness, the purity, the progress, and the highest welfare of the world.

And now she is gone. In great pageant and splendour her ashes will be borne to the grave in these next ensuing days. A week ago, and we hardly realised that she was ill. And now five days she has been dead. Monarch though she was, one whose dominions girdled the broad earth, a woman whose ears were greeted for sixty years with ascriptions of majesty, chief and greatest of the sovereigns of mankind, mother of her people, patriarchal in years, exalted in wisdom, she is dead. The grey king Death touched her as he would touch any other mortal, and she succumbed like the

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humblest cottager in all her lands at that solemn touch. The essential equality of the human race prevailed; and her heart ceased to beat as other hearts have ceased and must cease through the ages. And now it is in no robes of earthly majesty that her soul presents itself to God, but in the garment of the wife, the mother, her only crown the love she carries with her even beyond the grave, her only sceptre the love in her own pure spirit for those she leaves and for those she at last rejoins.

We think of her the tender child, who, when first her great inheritance flashed on her, cried, "I will be good." We think of her the fair young girl, who, when in the raw dawn they told her the inheritance was hers, said, "Pray for me." We think of her the bride, the wife, the sweet young mother, when the cup of happiness was full. We think of her in many a great pageant when tens of thousands shouted their plaudits as she passed. We think of her the widow, in the newness of her grief pouring out her heart to the sympathetic Scottish minister, sobbing out how "now all on earth seemed dead to her," yet "she would never shrink from duty." We think of her in the softer happiness of old age, with grandchildren and great-grandchildren about her knees. We think of her white-haired, crippled, with sight that was waxing dim, in these last sad months sitting silently weeping, either for friends that were gone or for the bitter sorrow of this sad war which harrowed her very soul. And even in our own deep sorrow we can hardly forbear a gleam of joy that at last the great peace has fallen on her and surrounded her—

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that at length the last and sweetest of those consolations has been given her which her noble poet-friend prayed for her in her early widowhood nigh two score years ago, when he sang—

“ May all love,
His love, unseen but felt, o’ershadow Thee,
The love of all Thy sons encompass Thee,
The love of all Thy daughters cherish Thee,
The love of all Thy people comfort Thee,
Till God’s love set Thee at his side again.”

She is gone, and we are left with our King with the old historic English name, and the Queen Consort, whom all of us whose memories date back to that time, loved from the moment her bright smile first glanced on the London streets, and the great English people, with all its splendid virtues and its grievous faults and its destinies for good and evil in its hands as it remembers God and truth and honour and duty, or forgets them. It is a moment of exceeding great crisis. The two paths diverge. On the one hand there is pure and generous aspiration after the higher national life, that the records of England may be sweet and clean, that we may hand down to our children an empire the home of justice, freedom, and righteousness between man and man. On the other hand, surging passions, lusts for gold, scoffings at holy things, mockings at God and at religion, open professions of a coarse and base materialism. From the Court which is the residence of kings, to the court which holds the cellar and the garret of the poorest, the

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great choice lies before us. Let every man and woman who believes in God and goodness, in faith, in high purpose, in religion, dedicate the soul afresh to the truest patriotism, the patriotism which prefers the good name of this sea-girt land to all the wealth that all the continents can pile together.

XI

*THE ECCLESIASTIC:
JOHN HENRY NEWMAN*

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THE ECCLESIASTIC: JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

I WISH to close these lectures on the "Makers of the Nineteenth Century" with some account of the relations of three illustrious men to the seething ecclesiastical problem of the age in which they lived. These three are John Henry Newman, first a leader of the Anglicans and afterwards a submissive son of Rome ; Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, who strove to liberate Anglicanism itself from the dead hand of traditional dogmatic control ; and James Martineau, who stood outside all dogmatic ecclesiasticism and championed a spiritual communion which should be free from the imposition of any ecclesiastical creeds whatever. The position assumed by each of these three was absolutely destructive of the positions held by the other two. They were entirely irreconcilable. Yet all three were men not only of brilliant intellectual parts, but of luminous spiritual goodness. To try to understand the position of each successively can hardly fail to be instructive to thoughtful and earnest minds.

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The nineteenth century, of all centuries which the world has yet lived through, was most remarkable for the sweeping tide of liberalism in religion which has carried the average mind to positions which a hundred years ago lay far beyond the remotest anticipation of the Churches. John Henry Newman is the mightiest representative among Englishmen of the back-wash which made against that strong and over-mastering tide. He is the one very great Englishman of the nineteenth century who set his face against religious liberalism. He alone succeeded in creating a coherent and substantial movement dead against the overwhelming tendencies of the age in which he lived.

Brought up in an evangelical home—though not, it would seem, a very strict one, since in his youth he read both Tom Paine and Hume—Newman tells us that even as a boy he was absolutely certain of only two existences, himself and God. It seemed to him more possible that the whole external world and all other human beings save himself should be mere creatures of his imagination, than that there should be no God. And though in later life he paid due respect to the reasons set forth by philosophers and theologians for the belief in God, he felt that belief itself to be prior to and independent of all reason—a certitude immediately created in the soul, of parallel rank with a man's certitude that he himself exists. At Oxford he was at first under the influence of Whately, the logician, afterwards Archbishop of Dublin, and was drawn by him in the direction of religious liberalism. But the moment he detected in himself and recognised that drift, he pulled up sharp ;

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and from that day his whole soul was set on building up an Anglican theology which should be a bulwark against liberalism and beat back its advance upon the Church of God.

To me, who all my life have believed with all my heart and soul in the principle of liberalism in all the concerns of man, the language in which Newman habitually speaks of it was strange and startling when first I began to read him. "The vital question was," says he near the beginning of his famous "Apologia," "how were we to keep the Church from being liberalised?" Again, to me, in whose ears the words "the right of private judgment" have always had a sacred ring, an appeal which stirred my blood, it was bewildering to read, "We have too great a horror of the principle of private judgment to trust it in so immense a matter." You, perhaps, for the most part agree with me in doing homage to the fundamental principles of private judgment and of liberalism—not, of course, a mere name of liberalism twisted and distorted from time to time to suit the exigencies of a party. You, perhaps, with me, look on the right of private judgment and liberalism in thought and word as sacred instruments for the progress and salvation of the world. If so, it will be all the more educative and wholesome to try to understand why a great and noble Englishman, a scholar, well-nigh a saint, set his face for sixty years against these two things as flint.

In the "Apologia pro Vita Sua" Newman has left us the most remarkable autobiography of a soul since Augustine of Hippo, 1,500 years ago, poured out the lava stream of his "Confessions." Charles

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Kingsley had committed the terrible error of publicly charging Newman with teaching that truth for its own sake neither need nor ought to be a virtue with the Roman clergy ; and insinuating against Newman a habit of "cunning equivocation." The Apologia is the great Catholic's reply ; and it is the record of a mind so transparently sincere, so solicitous for truth, so earnestly devout, that it stands in the literature of the world among the most priceless possessions in the treasury of Christendom.

Briefly we will recall from this world-famed book the successive stages in the religious development of Newman, from that day when he drew apart from Whately and set himself "to keep the Church from being liberalised," to the day when quietly at Littlemore the Passionist Father received the worn and weary controversialist into the bosom of the Roman Church.

When two-and-thirty years of age, John Henry Newman, with that brilliant son of genius, Hurrell Froude, set forth for a tour through Italy. Of Catholic society they saw almost nothing. But they communed together on how the English Church was to be saved from the corroding influence of the besetting liberalism. After Froude had gone back home Newman pushed on into Sicily, his mind and heart a cauldron of conflicting feelings. He would break into fits of sobbing. When his servant asked what ailed him, he could only answer, "I have a work to do in England ! I have a work to do." At last, in the early summer of 1833, he sailed in a Palermo orange-boat for Marseilles, *en route* to England. On that small ship, as the sunset

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glow overhung the Mediterranean waters, he wrote the lines :

“Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on.
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead thou me on.”

Then, once more in classic Oxford, with St. Mary's pulpit for his rostrum, he girded himself for battle. “I felt,” says he, “as on board a vessel, which first gets under weigh, and then the deck is cleared out, and luggage and live-stock stowed away into their proper receptacles.”

For what, then, was this young stalwart about to make his fight? He tells us very plainly the three great principles for which he strove :

First was the principle of dogma. “From the age of fifteen,” he declares, “dogma has been the fundamental principle of my religion; I know no other religion; I cannot enter into the idea of any other sort of religion.”

Second was his conviction that there is a visible Church ordained of God, with sacraments and rites which are the channels of invisible grace. Such Church he conceived to have through its bishops absolute claim on the obedience of Christians, and he believed that its doctrines were guaranteed by unbroken continuity down from Apostolic times.

Holding these two principles, Newman was bound to fight against liberalism, which denied all such authority to bishops or the Church. He was bound also to fight against Evangelical Protestantism, first, because it rejected those sacramental means of

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grace which he believed to be the one divinely appointed medicine for the soul ; and secondly, because it seemed to him to have no authority for its dogmas, and those dogmas, so far as they differed from the High Anglican, seemed to him heretical and false. But there was nothing in these two principles, that of dogma and that of a visible Church discharging sacramental functions, to hold him to the Anglican in preference to the Roman Church.

What, then, was the third of the leading principles which he infused into that famous historic movement which in the next ten years gathered round his person, and rent the religious world in twain ? It was rejection of the Church of Rome. When young, he distinctly held the Pope to be actual Antichrist, and "the stain" of that prejudice, he assures us, clung to him more or less till he was forty years of age. He held that Rome, in her later doctrines, had distinctly broken with antiquity and the tradition of Apostolic truth, and he especially condemned the honours which she paid to the Virgin and the saints.

And so there was left to him only the Anglican Church in all the world, incarnating the three leading principles which he held with so great fervour and tenacity.

These, then, were the stones with which was paved that "Via Media," that middle way, between Romanism and Protestantism, which he strove to lay down for the feet of the English people. And these things he preached with a fervour and a learning that concentrated on him the eyes of

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Oxford and the world. His sermons, indeed, were mainly ethical and practical. Though unclothed in rhetoric, and delivered without gesture and with eyes fixed steadily on his manuscript, they appealed to the consciences of men with extraordinary power. But they were steeped in the atmosphere of his ecclesiastical beliefs. And at the same time with the sermons, he and the band who had gathered round him were issuing a series of "Tracts for the Times," which penetrated into the rectories and vicarages of England, and compelled the attention of all religious and educated men. And with never swerving persistence these tracts enforced the three points of his doctrine—that dogma is the fundamental principle of all true religion ; that there is a visible Church ordained of God which by sacraments confers invisible grace on the souls of men ; that not the Roman but the Anglican communion possesses the distinguishing note of that Church, inasmuch as she, and she alone, has steadfastly held by Apostolic doctrine and can claim the full authority of antiquity.

So things went on from 1833 to 1839, the din of the warfare resounding more and more throughout the English world. The controversy was nominally a controversy against Rome, a contention for Anglican as against Roman churchmanship. But its real drift, though Newman knew it not, was to lead those who were deeply moved by it in the direction of Rome ; while it threw others—who perceived this drift—into the arms of that very liberalism which Newman most abhorred. It was only that Evangelical Protestantism which neither

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on the one hand could boast historic ecclesiastical authority, nor on the other hand frankly accorded the right of private judgment and the liberal method of thought, that suffered in the conflict—as suffer it always must, in my opinion, whenever disputants on either side get down to the bed-rock of first principles and are pledged to intellectual consistency.

“The Movement” then—as its promoters called it—was an effort strenuous and enthusiastic to erect the Church of England into a great sacerdotal institution, and to bring the sacramentalist view of religion home to the minds and lives of all men. Newman held that all external things are but signs and symbols of the spiritual; and so it accorded entirely with his philosophy to think that in baptism or the Eucharist, the outward material is the ordained and veritable symbol of spiritual grace. The effect of the genius and devotion of this young Anglican still vibrates through the English Church, and though it be more than half a century since he abjured her communion and finally embraced the discipleship of Rome, yet his influence is still unspent, and it is he who has been the agent in chief of that reaction which makes the sacerdotal party at this day the strongest and the boldest in the church of Cranmer and Ridley, of Chillingworth and Tillotson.

But it was soon to appear on what perilous foundations the uncompromising Anglican had built his argument. He based the supreme claim of his church to be the true Church of Christ on the faithfulness of her doctrines to those of the

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early centuries. But burrowing in the records of the controversies of those olden times, he suddenly discovered condemned as heresy by the undivided Church of the fifth Christian century doctrines which in the nineteenth century were widely held by the English Church. He could not set aside the condemnation as irrelevant, for his whole case rested on the contention that the doctrine of the Church of England now was identical with that of the undivided Church in ancient times. Yet he could not well admit that the condemnation applied to-day, for that was to say that Rome was right and England—or at any rate her prevailing teaching—wrong. It was the first small seed of doubt concerning the validity of the English claim.

And he fell almost at the same moment on that great saying of St. Augustine, "*Securus judicat orbis terrarum*"—"What the whole round world believes, that has the guarantee of truth." The words came to him with a strange and challenging power. They rang in his ears, as he says, like the "Turn again, Whittington," of the London chime. "*Securus judicat orbis terrarum.*" And which had the greater claim to speak for the whole round world—the Anglican communion, insular and isolated, or the Roman with her missions, her orders, her monks, her prelates in every land?

Could it, then, be that the proud claims he had made for the Church of his fatherland and his people were unfounded? Had his zeal, his enthusiasm, his devotion, the fervour of the brilliant men who had gathered round him, the whole inspiration of the Movement itself, which was his

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life, been for a delusion and deceit? Was the Via Media a false track, leading to heresy and schism? He would not, could not believe it. Where lay the stronghold of the alleged heretical teaching of the Church of England? What was the most Protestant, the least Catholic, portion of her accepted formularies? Undoubtedly the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, commonly regarded as a buttress against Rome. He would seize the Articles themselves and show that even they were capable of a Catholic interpretation, an interpretation consonant with the faith of the united Church before the Protestant Reformation. And Newman sat down to this bold task, and produced the last and most famous of the Tracts.

And so was launched upon the world "Tract XC." It was a most elaborate, most ingenious, and, I am persuaded, most ingenuous examination of the Articles of the Church of England; and its contention was that while those Articles condemned many practices and doctrines which had crept into the current usages of the Church of Rome, they condemned no practice and no doctrine authoritatively enforced by the Catholic Church prior to the Reformation.

The Tract was ingenious. It was also, I believe, ingenuous—as honest as it was earnest, as straightforward as it was erudite. But the bulk of English churchmen were Protestants, and believed the Articles to be the very citadel and keep of Protestantism. Accordingly the Tract at once roused a fury of opposition in Oxford, and in every city and parish of the land. It was thought that for the first

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time Newman had shown his hand ; that for the first time he had committed himself incontrovertibly to the Romanising of the English Church. For the first time it was said that the Movement, which had hitherto been but an ecclesiastical agitation interesting chiefly to the clergy, "came into collision with the nation."

The shock of the collision reverberated far and wide. England was aroused ; and forces of opposition sprang into active being, which shook the Movement to its foundation and filled Newman and his friends with sheer amazement.

His bishop—always a generous friend and pastor—remonstrated and counselled the total discontinuance of the Tracts. Newman at once obeyed and stopped the series. But bishop after bishop "charged" against him. It was not enough that the Tracts were discontinued. Their Romanising teachings must be wiped out of the English Church.

Then came an incident which did more than any other single occurrence to shake the waning faith of Newman in the Church of his allegiance.

The Archbishop of Canterbury combined with Lutheran Prussia to plan the installation of a Bishop of Jerusalem who should have charge over all consenting Protestant communities in Palestine. It was to abandon the local character of the English Church on which Newman laid great stress. It was further to recognise and receive into communion heretical bodies which abjured the very principle of Episcopacy. To Newman it was a blasphemous apostasy, a capitulation of religion to worldly

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politics, a breach with Catholicity and Antiquity which no explanation could repair.

The great controversialist resigned the living of St. Mary's, and presently retired into lay communion with the Church of England. But there was no rest for him there even in the quiet retreat of Littlemore. The persecution never flagged. And step by step with the outward persecution proceeded the silent changes in his own mind which prepared him at last for the final act. This is how he himself describes this change of mind :

"I came gradually to see that the Anglican Church was formally in the wrong, . . . that the Church of Rome was formally in the right ; then that no valid reasons could be assigned for continuing in the Anglican, and again that no valid objections could be taken to joining the Roman. Then, I had nothing more to learn ; what still remained for my conversion was, not further change of opinion, but to change opinion itself into the clearness and firmness of intellectual conviction."

Then at last in October, 1845, twelve years after he had set forth in the first ardour of his call to arouse the Anglican Church against the threatening liberalism, and when he had lived just half the eighty-nine years which were his span on earth, quietly at his house at Littlemore he was received by the Passionist Father, Dominic, into that Church whose head he had for so large a portion of his life regarded as the very Antichrist accursed in Scripture.

It was a strange pilgrimage ; one in which none of us, I suppose, can follow him. Yet that man's Protestantism must surely be of a hard and ungenial

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type who does not feel some gleam of gladness that at last the brave and dauntless combatant, bearing his scars upon him, had found his rest. A score of years later he wrote of his life since then : "I have been in perfect peace and contentment ; I never have had one doubt. . . . It was like coming into port after a rough sea ; and my happiness on that score remains to this day without interruption."

It was a strange pilgrimage ; but starting from his starting-point it seems to me it was the only consistent journey he could make.

If you assume that there is a body of dogmatic truth and a system of sacramental practice on the receiving of which the salvation of the soul depends—then, it seems to me, you are forced to the belief that there is some one authorised Church of God which is to be the guardian of that faith and the channel of that grace. To suppose that God has made the eternal welfare of the soul dependent on the acceptance of one precise theology and the practice of one precise ritual, and yet has left the theology and the ritual to the chance judgment of each individual mind, with all our differences of capacity, of circumstance, of training, of disposition, of opportunity, of prejudice, of bias ; is to suppose that he has recklessly cast us into a seething ocean of conflict in which scarce one in a million will make the land. Grant the premises, and an authoritative Church is a moral necessity of the case. And if there is to be an authoritative Church, that which for all these centuries has had her centre on the seven hills of Rome, which has stretched forth her hand over all nations, which

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nursed the civilisation of man through the early and the mediæval centuries, which has continued steadfast, unshaken, through all the shocks of controversy and the revolutions of the nations, can set forth claims to be that Church with which no other can compete. There is no true resting place between Authority and absolute freedom of individual thought—or, rather, no true resting place between an external, a visible, an historic Authority and the Authority of a man's own mind and conscience, the experiences of the individual soul of each child of God.

Newman held that there are but two consistent positions for the human mind—the one blank Atheism, the other Catholicity in the obedience of Rome. It is for men who love freedom, who hold private judgment no temptation of the devil, but a trust from God, liberalism no easy way to infidelity, but the instrument of the highest righteousness and the truest faith, to show that there is a third consistency, higher, nobler, purer than either of the other two, the consistency of the man who has been led to simple Theism, pure trust in God as the Father of us all, conceived in the spirit and loved in the temper of that great Son of Man who taught us that God listens to our prayer and cares for us with a love which knows no exception of person and no bound of time.

XII

*THE BROAD CHURCHMAN:
ARTHUR PENRHYN STANLEY*

XII

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THE preceding lecture dwells on the life and work of a great Englishman who counted dogma the very foundation of religion, and to whom the only question was, "What ecclesiastical organisation has preserved and developed Christian dogma in its greatest purity?" We are now to turn to one whose religion was independent altogether of dogma properly so called, and whose only interest in dogmas was in the historical and personal associations entwined with them—the figures of Athanasius and of Arius, of Cranmer and of Laud.

Arthur Penrhyn Stanley was the son of Edward Stanley, who first held a living at Alderley and was afterwards Bishop of Norwich. Edward Stanley was among that group of clergymen in the early part of the nineteenth century who led the reaction in favour of decency, decorum, and pastoral devotion, against the gross worldliness and self-indulgence which too many of the rectories and vicarages of England had witnessed in the preceding decades. From his father and his mother Stanley drew much

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of his sweet and noble character. But from Arnold of Rugby he drew the greatest intellectual and religious influences of his life. He is the "Arthur" of "Tom Brown's School Days." He came up from Rugby to Oxford in the first swellings of that mighty influence which we have already traced, the "*Movement*" of Newman, the proclamation of the Via Media. But he wore a breastplate of triple brass, which the shafts of no sacerdotalism could ever pierce. The vital question, said Newman, is "how to keep the Church from being liberalised." The vital question, taught Stanley, is how to liberalise the Church, how to prevent her ever becoming the domain and preserve of a single party, how to broaden the bounds of her freedom, how to make the spirit of Christ her inspiration as against the insistence on any particular dogma, how to rear her sons to the spirit of truth and love above and behind and beyond all particular versions of theology.

Let us glance at his outward career. In 1834, at nineteen years of age, he began a residence at Oxford, which, in various capacities, he continued almost unbroken till he was thirty-six. In 1851 he took a canonry at Canterbury. In 1856, aged forty-one, he returned to Oxford as Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History. In 1864, at forty-nine, he entered on the Deanery of Westminster, with which his name and fame remain imperishably intertwined.

I well remember the first time that I saw him. It was in 1876 or 1877, when already he was past his sixtieth year, and the noble wife who for a brief twelve years had shared his every thought and

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aspiration was no longer at his side. I desired to enlist his co-operation in a matter which I knew would command his sympathy. And I visited him by invitation in that vast study of his which was littered all over with a veritable chaos of letters and papers and books. He looked an old man already, small, wiry, with quick grey eye, and a countenance on which every phase of thought and feeling played in swift variety—but always with kindness—with an infinite “sweetness and light,” as his old school-fellow would have said—underlying it all. I made my suggestion to him, and he pondered in doubt. Then, casting his glance at a marble bust of his wife which stood on the table beside him, with a gentle pathos he said, “Ah, if she were here, she would tell me what I ought to do.” A few years later, at the age of sixty-six, he was called up to join her in the life beyond.

The qualities of mind and heart which were ever revealed in the countenance and conversation of Dean Stanley shine also in his writings. Seldom have any man's books been so perfect a mirror of himself. Indeed, he could write only what he thought and felt. His eyes, his tongue, his pen always spoke what was to him the truth—and they always spoke the truth in love. This love, so easy to talk about, to preach about, so rarely maintained as the ruling spring of life, was by him steadfastly so maintained. “Dean Stanley,” said one who was of his own spirit, “stood higher in the respect and affection of a larger and more varied circle of members of many churches than any ecclesiastic in the world.” None had more combated the

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spirit of Dissent. Yet Nonconformists counted it a priceless privilege to be amongst his pall-bearers, and loved the taunt of his enemies that he was "honorary member of all the denominations." Against none had he shot out such shafts of raillery as at the Ritualists. Yet it was the hot-headed Archdeacon Denison who a few hours after his death spoke the most touching tribute of tender friendship which was laid on his grave. His love extended not only to the Arnolds and Stanleys of other churches, to Philaret, the gentle bishop of Moscow and Kolomna, to Chunder Sen, the Theist of Bengal, but (what is so much rarer) to the most vehement opponents of his own principles and policy in his own land and his own Church. For he had an almost miraculous power of realising the inner mind and heart of men of every type and character. He had a sympathy which placed every chance acquaintance at his ease. He had a depth of spiritual and religious feeling which was concentrated in that sentiment of brotherhood to all men in sonship to the Father, which was the inspiration and the power of Jesus Christ.

What, then, was the theological, what was the ecclesiastical position of this man in whom flowered to so rare a bloom the spirit of Christ ?

It is neither as theologian nor as ecclesiastic that his position is most eminent, but as an historian of extraordinarily vivid and picturesque endowment. The Hebrew chieftain leading his hordes across the Sinaitic desert ; the Apostle of the Gentiles preaching the Gospel of the Cross to the sailors and loungers on the quays of Corinth ; Athanasius, the "small,

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insignificant young man of hardly twenty-five years of age, of lively manners and speech and of bright, serene countenance," "taking the words out of the Bishop's mouth" at the Council of Nicæa; Arius, at that same Council of their mortal conflict, "sixty years of age, very tall and thin, apparently unable to support his stature," with "an odd way of contorting and twisting himself which his enemies compare to the wriggings of a snake," "a strange, captivating, moon-struck giant;" Columba in rapt vision on Iona; St. Margaret on the beach of the Firth of Forth—these all live before us on his pages as though we saw them with our eyes and heard them with our ears. The fascination of the picture diverts Stanley from any historical criticism properly so-called. Yet he remains, perhaps, the foremost historian for sheer brilliancy whom the nineteenth century produced, that century which also gave us Motley and Macaulay.

But the theologian? The ecclesiastic?

They are not wise who, like his successor in the Deanery, have held up Arthur Stanley as a great theologian. To be a great theologian a man must not only be a deeply religious man, though that is the first qualification, but he must have habits of accurate scientific thought; and Stanley himself once said to me, and said most truly, "I have not a grain of science in my composition." He was, therefore, not a great theologian; yet some of the best elements of a great theologian he exhibited in almost unexampled brilliancy. No man ever had a firmer grasp of the principle that statements concerning God and divine things are to be judged still

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more by the vital force with which they energise the soul, than by the nicety with which they can be fitted into a metaphysical construction. He demanded moral significance of a theological statement if it was to be held to embody a living truth. And it was he, the Very Reverend Arthur Stanley, Dean of Westminster, as Dean Bradley has pointed out, who wrote, "When Bishop Pearson in his work on the Creed vindicates the Divinity of Christ without the slightest mention of any of those moral qualities by which He has bowed down the world before Him, his grasp on the doctrine is far feebler than that of Rousseau or Mill, who have seized the very attributes which constitute the marrow and essence of His nature." Seeing what the average theologian is, we cannot afford to put out of the theological court a man who pertinaciously insisted on testing theological conclusions by the touch of the conscience and the spirit.

But in intellectual exactitude he was strangely deficient. So charitable was he that he wanted to make out every one else as charitable as himself. He would take any theologian at haphazard, it would seem, men of the most precise habits of definition, who linked their reasonings together in a metallic chain of logic, and proceed to dissolve all the links and interpret their utterances into delightful agreement with his own large and benevolent tolerance. So he treated the great theologians of antiquity. So he treated Luther and Calvin and the stern compilers of the Westminster Confession. So he treated the various schools of the English Universities in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

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In this fashion he dissolved away the Atonement ; he dissolved away the Trinity. But all the while he used the traditional language of those great doctrines, seemingly unaware that he was absolutely denying them in any sense which any Church which had ever been would have passed as orthodox. He reduces the three Persons of the Trinity, for example, to mere expressions of Natural, of Historical, and of Spiritual Religion respectively, dissolving in the alembic of his vague and generous liberalism the historical theology of the Church. From that essay the reader may well rise with a sense of general agreement. Undoubtedly divine influences may be contemplated under these three aspects. But why not five, or a dozen, or a score ? This the ancient doctrine of the Trinity preserved in the bosom of the Catholic Church ! Spirit of Athanasius, what parody is this of the great teaching for which thou didst strive and suffer with a constancy and courage to which even thy foes must for all time do homage ?

But as with Newman, so with Stanley, it is the ecclesiastical position which is of the profoundest interest and significance. He and Frederick Maurice will stand in history as the two great pillars in the nineteenth century of the Broad Church interpretation of the Church of England. But they stood for two very different phases and methods of Broad Churchism. Maurice was profoundly interested in dogma for its own sake, and with extraordinary subtlety put an interpretation on the Creeds consonant with the liberal spirit and with a modern philosophy. But he valued the Creeds as arks of the eternal truth. Stanley cared nothing at all for

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the Creeds except as monuments of the historical conflicts out of which they arose. His whole strength was thrown into the struggle to minimise to the utmost the binding significance of subscription, of creeds, of liturgy, in order that every religious man might feel himself free—no matter what his theology—to enter the English Church and discharge its sacred offices.

Accordingly, in 1850, in an article on the famous Gorham judgment, he emphatically declared "that the Church of England, by the very condition of its being, was not High, or Low, but Broad," and had always included, and been meant to include, opposite and contradictory opinions on points even more important than those raised by the Gorham case.

And so we have the spectacle of a man in whose own mind dogma had dissolved in a mist of religious sensibility and Christian sympathy fighting in turn for the inclusion of every kind of dogmatist within the four walls of the Church of England. Mainly through his efforts legislation was effected which somewhat relaxed the terms of clerical subscription. He battled strenuously, though in vain, to get the recital of the Athanasian Creed made optional instead of obligatory. When Newman's Tract XC. burst upon the world and "came into collision with the nation," Stanley was among the foremost to resist the movement for turning Newman and all his kind out of the English Church. In 1850, when the Gorham judgment secured the position of the Evangelicals in the Church against their extrusion by the High Church party, he applauded that judgment loudly. Broad Churchman though he was, he dis-

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liked intensely Colenso's method of criticising the Pentateuch. But when in the Lower House of Convocation a motion of censure against that bold prelate was under discussion, Stanley threw a bomb-shell into that reverend assembly by a sudden blank avowal of naked heresies which hitherto he had always draped in decorous garb, and a challenge to the House to excommunicate him himself instead of the Bishop of Natal.

The arguments by which such a man sought to defeat all efforts at exclusion were by no means always agreeable to the threatened party for whom he fought. He never could take sacerdotalism altogether seriously, and pleaded the absolute indifference of the cherished High Church vestments inasmuch as they were but survivals of the shirt, the shawl, the overcoat of the peasantry of early times.

But for the historic Establishment of England Stanley had a love and an enthusiasm that knew no bounds. He believed that the Church should include the whole Christian people of England. He held that as the Church of the nation, a Church knowing no other head than the monarch on the throne, no other fountain of law and regulation than the nation's Parliament, that Church afforded a freedom and a latitude to ministers and people which no private sect could offer.

It was in consonance with views thus broad and generous, though to my mind essentially fallacious, that he sought to relax the bonds of subscription to the Articles and the Book of Common Prayer. He got a general assent to the doctrine of that volume substituted for assent and consent to each and every

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doctrine which it contained. And he could not understand why any Christian man should any longer hesitate to set his hand to it.

But there is another difficulty which Stanley failed altogether to realise or appreciate. The clergyman of the Church of England has not only at the outset to subscribe his assent to the documents and doctrine of that communion; he has in every service to repeat, amid every sanction of solemnity, certain dictated Creeds, averring before God and man his personal belief in each and every clause of which they are built up. He has not only to submit himself to a table of Lessons and a selection of Psalmody which wholly deprive him of discretionary choice, but he has to pray in the very words and syllables set down for him more than three centuries ago and in no others whatsoever. It has once more been contended lately, as it often has been contended, that a clergyman of the Church of England is more free than the minister of any other Christian body. The contention seems incomprehensible and extraordinary, seeing that he is under unrelaxing discipline in every moment of public worship, and his very prayers to God—his confessions, his aspirations, his petitions, his thanksgivings—are with absolute rigidity dictated and prescribed.

To those of us who are accustomed to a more spontaneous worship in the assembly of the people, it would seem that even to a man who believes every phrase of every collect, of the litany, and of the three creeds, so inflexible a formulary must sometimes be sorely trying. But for one who, like the kindly Dean himself, knew that the Prayer-book

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represented a multitude of differing minds, now reflecting the rigid Protestantism of Cranmer, now the High Anglicanism of Laud, one would have thought the difficulty of submission would have presented itself as ethically very grave. Yet Stanley took manifest pleasure in now voicing one layer of historic theology and now another ; for his historic sense always outmeasured all else. But to a man not of this easy type, to a man who clearly sees that one utterance in the liturgy is the sheer dogmatic contradiction of another, to a man who has emerged from mediævalism in theology and thinks with a modern mind and cares much about the subject-matter of religion, to a man who, believing, let us say, neither in the virgin-birth, nor in the resurrection of the body, nor that Christ descended into hell, in any simple and natural interpretation of those phrases, counts it the first law of righteousness to speak the truth and nothing but the truth, and in the solemn moment in which as spokesman of the people he addresses God or addresses in the name of God and Christ the people, holds himself doubly bound to that transparent truthfulness,—to such a man what a mockery it is to tell him that the Church of England will give him freedom, what a fatuous futility to invite him to become her minister !

Do not misconceive me. I know that many of these Broad Churchmen who accepted the good Dean's counsels have been and are amongst the most tender-hearted, brave, and lovable of men. For the Dean himself I conceived an affection warmer, I think, than for any other man I ever

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met of whom I saw so little. I only met him thrice. But surely this is a sophisticated conscience that permits a man to use in the solemn worship of God words which do not represent his own sincerest intellectual convictions. It seems to me an awful example of the power of custom and usage to cauterise the moral judgment that good men should hold themselves justified in playing fast and loose with terms and phrases in the functions of public prayer and exhortation. Again and again I have heard men praised for their candour and their daring in flinging to the winds in their sermons the doctrines of the creeds they just now stood up and repeated in the solemn public service of religion. Yet surely to a plain man there could be no greater scandal than that one claiming to be a teacher and exemplar of morals and religion should thus utter himself with a two-fold voice. How must such example act and re-act on the consciences and practice of society, of men engaged in law, in politics, in commerce, in the multitudinous affairs of the world! All mutual trust, all honour, all honesty, all health in the business of mankind hangs on the fidelity of men in their spoken word, on their refusing at any cost to shape their lips to declarations which do not correspond to the actual belief that is in them. And that sturdy Quaker, William Forster, was surely right when he said that no man could estimate the measure in which this practice of so many clergy is answerable for the commercial immorality which every honourable mind deplors.

Dean Stanley at all times rejoiced in Compromise.

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He held that word to be the name of a great and gracious virtue, implying mutual concession and consideration on the part of men of divergent views. But there is one case at least in which Compromise ceases to be virtuous ; and that is when it makes infraction on the impregnable claims on our allegiance which belong to that to which we give the august name of Principle.

A mass of bright, loving, generous inconsistency, Stanley gave his life to the increase of Christian kindness. He made his ancient and glorious Abbey the centre of a Christian charity that puts to shame the prevailing temper of ecclesiastics. Even the Unitarian heretic he invited and welcomed, with his fellow Revisers, to the solemn Communion Service of his Church. But all the sweetness and beauty of his fraternal spirit cannot cancel the weakening which he countenanced of the claims of uncompromising veracity.

I know well the objections there are to leaving it to every pulpiteer to carve and shape the public services of religion as he will. I know how it opens the door to slovenliness, to vulgarity, to offences in many degrees. I know how heavy a responsibility it imposes on those who hold the solemn office of leading the worship of the people. I know how much we may thereby miss of beauty, of refinement, of impressiveness in the assembly for prayer and praise. But I believe that the first of all requirements when souls are invited to open themselves to God is that no man should be required or consent to pronounce words which in his inmost heart he does not believe to be true.

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Stanley sought to liberalise the English Church, first, by relaxing the terms of subscription to her formulae; secondly, by discouraging what he deemed an excessive scrupulosity in the use of the language of prayer and creed. His zeal for a wide comprehension within the portals of that historic Church was generous and noble. But we will ask James Martineau, in our final lecture, whether there be not a better way of building a Church wide as the love of Christ, of gathering a community of worshipping souls from which none shall be outcast and in which no scrupulous conscience shall suffer violence.

XIII

*THE PROPHET-PHILOSOPHER:
JAMES MARTINEAU*

XIII

THE PROPHET-PHILOSOPHER : JAMES MARTINEAU

THE persecution of the Huguenots in France gave England some of her finest samples of brain and conscience. Near the end of the seventeenth century Gaston Martineau, surgeon, forsook the land of his birth, and settled first in London and then in Norwich. More than a hundred years later, in the fourth generation from Gaston, was born in that same town James Martineau, in whom was developed in its finest essence the Huguenot intelligence and character.

Of the thirteen "Makers of the Nineteenth Century" whom I have striven to set before you in imagination, this James Martineau stands much the nearest to me. My predecessor in this pulpit, for whom indeed this church was built,¹ my tutor for the six years of my college life, the master of my thinking throughout the years of my maturer man-

¹ Hope Street Church, Liverpool, to which Martineau and his congregation migrated from Paradise Street Chapel in 1849.

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hood, the supreme object of my reverence and regard among the men whom I have closely known, his figure, his personality, is no easy one for me to draw with due perspective and proportion.

A youth of seventeen he is apprentice to an engineer at Derby, but travels the sixteen miles to Nottingham to attend the funeral of the husband of his cousin, one Henry Turner, a young minister cut off in the morning of his days through his faithfulness in visiting cases of infectious fever. And the emotion and the love displayed around the open grave so touch the heart of the engineer apprentice, that henceforth he would himself be a minister ; and he is presently student in the little academy at York where tutors barred out from the Universities of the nation are teaching with an erudition and a wealth of scholarship rarely equalled in those Universities themselves. And of all their pupils young James Martineau is the most diligent and brilliant. Then a brief ministry at Dublin, terminated by his conscientious scruple against receiving the so-called royal bounty levied by tax on Protestant and Catholic alike while he is teaching doctrine acceptable neither to one or other. Then the invitation to Paradise Street Chapel, Liverpool. The young man of twenty-seven is thus described by Charles Wicksteed, his life-long friend : the pulpit-staircase "was quietly ascended by a tall young man, thin, but of muscular frame, with dark hair, pale but not delicate complexion, a countenance full in repose of thought, and in animation of intelligence and enthusiasm, features belonging to no regular type or order of beauty, yet leaving the impression of a very

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high kind of beauty, and a voice so sweet and clear and strong without being in the least loud, that it conveyed all the inspiration of music, without any of its art or intention."

The preaching of this young man in the city, like that of a still younger, John Hamilton Thom, in the country chapel of Toxteth at the same time, was of an order which Liverpool had not heard before. Absolutely free intellectually, unhampered by any creeds or articles, transparently sincere, profoundly earnest, intensely spiritual, it captured the minds and charmed the hearts of not a few of the best and most cultured men and women in the seaport town just showing the first prophecy of its commercial greatness. In a day when breadth of thought in pulpits seemed almost a contradiction in terms, and no magazines brought daring speculations into the drawing-rooms and libraries of the home, the Sunday utterances of a man like Martineau had a width and depth of influence which was quite unique. Indeed, so alarmed did orthodoxy become at the attention paid to these young Unitarian divines—Mr. Thom himself also now transferred to a city pulpit—that presently thirteen clergymen of the Establishment—the Rev. Fielding Ould at their head—announced that in thirteen successive discourses they would "refute" Unitarianism. Martineau, Thom, and Mr. Giles (now minister at Toxteth) took up the challenge. Every Wednesday evening they occupied what was known as "the condemned pew" at Christ Church, and heard their faith denounced as a blasphemous infidelity. Every following Tuesday one or other of them replied in

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Paradise Street Chapel to the preceding lecture. The orthodox attack was from a position which few educated theologians would defend to-day, a position of absolute acceptance of the infallibility of Scripture, supplemented by something very like assumption of the infallibility of Mr. Fielding Ould and his twelve associates. The heretical replies were from the standpoint of a liberal and generous learning, untouched by the spirit of intolerance, rejoicing in every ray of light which God casts upon the world. They were illustrated with an amplitude of scholarship amazing when the haste and pressure of their preparation is remembered. And if they won but a few fresh adherents to the ministrations of their authors, they gave to their teaching a status and a consideration in the eyes of their fellow-citizens which such teaching had never enjoyed before. And it was unquestionably James Martineau who stood out as protagonist, foremost champion of the wider gospel.

Then in the forties he put forth under the title of "Endeavours after the Christian Life," volumes of sermons which sent the currents of his fame down many channels far beyond the reach of his living voice; and England began to know that she had a new teacher who was to count in the evolution of the nineteenth Christian century.

As the forties were closing, his people set to work to build him a church on the outskirts of the town, which should be worthy of his rising reputation. This Hope Street Church was the issue of their effort. While its stones were being laid and its spire reared, he took a year of studious retreat in

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Germany, and quite new vistas of thought and knowledge opened out before his ingenuous mind. Now it was that the old mechanical metaphysics and utilitarian ethics began rapidly to fall away from him, and he awoke to a spiritual philosophy having its base in the mind and the conscience of man, and providing a fastness for religion which no scientific discoveries and no revolutions in historical criticism could by any possibility ever imperil. At the very moment when the doctrine of evolution was shadowing itself forth in the minds of Darwin and others, when the preparation was being made for those vast revelations of the religious mind of antiquity outside the bounds of Israel, which Max Müller was presently to popularise, when the investigations of Baur and Strauss were beginning to be talked of in England, and the startling conclusions of the "Essays and Reviews" and of Bishop Colenso were secretly preparing, at the very moment when a whole array of new learning all along the line was about to make the old defences of religion untenable by informed and candid minds, Martineau was preparing for his people, for his country, for the world, a new theory and philosophy of religion, which the new scholarship could never imperil, could only, where it came in contact at all, confirm.

Only eight years of ministry in Liverpool remained. In 1857, in the fulness of his powers, Martineau removed to London as Professor in Manchester New College, the only institution in England devoted to free teaching and free learning in theology, and imposing no subscription to articles of faith either upon teacher or on student. And for

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nearly thirty years, with unfailing punctuality, he discharged his academical functions, letting no avocation call him off from his duty to the youths—often not more than two or three—who awaited him in the college class-room. But meanwhile, by essay after essay on the loftiest and profoundest themes of human thought, he was compelling the attention and regard of the thinking world. And when, at eighty years of age, he at last began his larger literary life, and in the succeeding half-dozen years put forth his three monumental works, the “Types of Ethical Theory,” the “Study of Religion,” and the “Seat of Authority in Religion,” already the wisest and best throughout England and America were awaiting the full unfolding of his philosophy with an eagerness of anticipation not often paralleled.

Indeed, if his full recognition as a master-mind, a “Maker of the Nineteenth Century,” was slow in coming, when once it came it was swift and complete. Five great Universities—first of all bold Harvard, then learned and liberal Leyden, then the more cautious Edinburgh and Dublin, and Oxford most timid of all, bestowed on him doctorships of honour. In the Metaphysical Society he met in friendly debate most of the other master-minds of England both in orthodoxy and in heresy, and was felt by more than one to be greatest of them all. Finally, on the day that he was eighty-three, he received an address of deepest reverence and affection, bearing the signatures, among those of a multitude of men of light and leading, of Tennyson and Browning, of Lecky and of Lowell, of Max Müller and of Jowett, of Cheyne and of Sanday, of Phillips

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Brooks and Stopford Brooke, and of the great leaders of Continental scholarship, Renan, Pfeleiderer, Lipsius, Kuenen, and many more.

There still remained twelve years of quiet and honoured age—and one or two magazine articles, a book of prayers, and a little volume of sermons were given to the world, the last when the author was ninety-two. On the verge of ninety-five, in the early days of the year 1900, James Martineau passed up into that unseen world which his prophetic inspiration had done something to unveil to such as were of his spirit.

And what was the teaching of this great mind, master of the thinking of the ages, comrade in soul with such as have pierced deepest into the mysteries of God, on the themes which touch most nearly the permanent interest of mankind? "Prophet-philosopher" I have ventured to entitle him; and such he truly was: that prophet-vision was his which at all times has revealed to holy men the deep things of the spirit; but instructed philosopher was he also, adjudicating at the bar of reason on every claim put forth by the moral and spiritual nature of man.

It is not possible here to offer any detailed account of the convictions or the faith which he attained. We must be content to note the general principles which he reached, and how they affect his attitude towards such great practical questions of ecclesiasticism as so deeply interested John Henry Newman and Arthur Stanley.

When Martineau made that fruitful visit to the University of Berlin at the close of the first half of the century, he carried with him—already, indeed,

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somewhat torn and discredited—the philosophy which he had learned of Paley, of Hume, of the Mills. No doctrine, indeed, could enter the alembic of his mind, without being coloured and shaped by his own personality. But as yet he had not put off the thinking of the materialistic and utilitarian schools. Accordingly, in metaphysics, he was accustomed to modes of thought which had resolved the idea of cause into a mere unvarying sequence of phenomena. “A” was not the cause of “B” in any other sense than that when “A” happened, “B” always happened after, or “B” the effect of “A” in any other sense than that when “B” happened, “A” had always happened before. But now the study of Plato and the teaching of the famous Trendelenburg set free his thinking from the artificiality of the schools, and he recognised that there was a deeper meaning in cause than that—that always there was a determining power passing from the causal antecedent to the consequent. Pain always followed a blow on the head, and Tuesday always followed Monday. But there was some closer causal bond between the blow and the pain than between the second day of the week and the third. And interrogating the working of his own mind rather than the formulæ of books, he discovered that he never spoke of cause without thinking of some living power, and that when he traced back from cause to cause, he could never rest till he came to a living Will determining all the movements of the natural world, and must by the very make of his faculties think “God” behind the movements of the stars upon their courses, and

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every motion down to the opening of the flower on its stem. The universe was charged with this living power—not slumbering and waking up, not intermittent, not interfering now and again, but perpetual and universal, present and energising in every moment of everlasting time, in every spot of illimitable space. And so God was, for him, not the mechanician watching his worlds go round from the spin he gave them at the start, but the ever present energy in every throb of matter, in every quiver of ether through the heavens.

That was the first great revolution. All cause in its ultimate analysis the action of living will ; and the supreme and ultimate cause of all, the living will of God. The structure of his mind was such that when he faithfully obeyed it, then he could think no other.

And Martineau had brought with him to Germany the characteristically English doctrine that utility was the criterion of right, that virtue meant the enlightened pursuit of pleasure, the enlightened avoidance of pain. There was indeed a certain haze as to whether the pleasure to be sought, the pain to be shunned was ultimately just the man's own pleasure or pain, or that of the human race at large. Paley, the theologian, had constantly taught the former. Virtue was to seek heaven and to escape hell. Reward and punishment were the only incentives and preventives. The younger Mill, with a generous inconsistency, had sought by some loophole to let in the weal or woe of our brother men as determining motives. But that the calculable pleasure or pain resulting determined the rightness

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or viciousness of conduct, that goodness, that holiness had no other criterion, this was the basal doctrine; and Martineau brought it with him to Berlin. But when—under the tutorship of Trendelenburg—he began to steep his mind in the atmosphere of Plato, by degrees he found that doctrine fading and dissolving. And there dawned upon him the sublime conception of an absolute righteousness, an absolute holiness which was its own guarantee and sanction, stood before the soul in its own primeval right, apart from all support from considerations of utility or measurements of pleasure or pain. He found that the actual call of duty in the secret places of his own soul was not a reasoned inference from probable results, but a voice sounding in him from the depths and altitudes of the eternal, a command bearing in its own awful tones the witness of its authority; and he knew now in the silence that this was God speaking to him out of the mystery of his infinite being; and he apprehended God anew as the living Righteousness, the Author and Fountain of duty, the all-authoritative Holiness, whom to obey was life, whom to defy was death.

And so by a second avenue of his spiritual nature God was revealed to him. The infinite Goodness coalesced with the infinite Power; the eternal Authority with the eternal Will; and the God of Nature and the God of Conscience encompassed and commanded him with a flashing brilliance of reality which the halting philosophy of his youth had veiled.

With that twofold message—that twofold argu-

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ment, that twofold revelation—the preacher returned to his congregation, the philosopher to his native land. And from this very spot where with faltering lips I stand to-day, facing down this pillared sanctuary, the voice of the prophet-philosopher a little more than fifty years ago first enunciated that message which was to swell into a great volume, and ere he died be recognised and hailed as the mightiest defence of spiritual religion in the strifes and battles of his time.

Religion, then, was a far deeper thing than the common teachers and preachers had supposed. It was the realisation by man of the relation in which he stood to a God who was immanent, perpetual, permeating, penetrating, the causal Agent of all the phenomena of the world, the Commandant speaking in the breast of every man who was called to the combat between good and evil.

That relation was a fundamental and universal fact. Nothing could ever alter it. It was there—there yesterday, to-day, and for ever. All that could vary was man's realisation of the fact, his measure of appreciation of this supreme relation. Just in the measure in which men thought deeply and obeyed loyally, would the vividness and certainty of their appreciation grow. And so Bibles, Churches, declarations of Councils, authority of Creeds, could never in the nature of things be more than secondary. The true veritable "orthodoxy"—the "straight thinking and judging"—was a matter between the man and his Maker. Bibles might illuminate him. Churches might train him. But the fact lay between him and God; and so any who

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claimed authority over his mind and conscience, withdrawing him from immediate allegiance to God, was an usurper of the right divine, were he Presbyter or Pope.

There was one way and one way only by which the individual soul could draw into the fullest recognition of which it was capable of the fact of its relation with God, and that was by freest intercourse with God in the secret audience-chamber of the understanding and the conscience. Freedom was the very condition of progress in the truth. There was an authority waiting for a man in the arcana of his being that lay behind all Synods, all Councils, all Westminster Assemblies; and what the preacher had to do was to cut away all that impeded the man's entrance into the chamber of communion, to thrust him within and bid him close the door.

Hence the ecclesiasticism of Martineau could not possibly be the ecclesiasticism of Newman. Newman saw the one ark of truth in a Church preserving unaugmented and undiminished, though developed in expression, the legacy of Apostolic truth. Martineau saw the one ark of truth in the mind and heart of a man himself; its one revelation in the speaking voice and unveiled face of God. And so the one toiled to bind men fast in the leashes of the Church; the other sought to cut them loose and leave them free to listen for the heavenly speech, to watch for the light that lighteth every man born into the world.

But neither could Martineau's ecclesiasticism be that of Stanley. For Stanley sought to draw men

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together in one ecclesiastical organisation wherein the utterance of collect or of creed should be but the rehearsal of historic layers of faith held by successive generations of the dead. But Martineau would bid the living man go pray to the living God ; and in that act there could be no more dire disloyalty than to shape the lips to doctrines which found no response from the deep experiences of the soul. A naked sincerity was the very condition of worship—whether in the silent secrecy of the closet or in the great assembly of the church.

But Martineau had an ecclesiastical ideal of his own for which he often pleaded and to which he lived faithful throughout long and laborious days. He would have men come together for prayer and praise ; he would have them form societies for worship and for service. Only the bond was not to be community of creed, adhesion to any articles, acceptance of any dogma, still less the repetition of dogmas unbelieved. It was to be a common love, a common aspiration, a common sentiment, a common yearning for union with God, a common spirit of brotherhood among men. He saw no reason why men of widely varying theology—of widely varying interpretation, that is, of the phenomena of the religious consciousness—should not kneel side by side to seek a common blessing, and together voice their praises to the Supreme. He did not see why the Churches themselves should not be left free, with the advance of light and learning, to pass on into new and loftier phases of thought and hope. And so, though himself a convinced and persuasive Unitarian, never either ashamed or

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afraid so to declare himself, he would be no party to the construction of a Church tied up to Unitarianism or any other creed. He would open the doors to all. Above all he would leave in God's hands the evolution of faith in generations to come. And so when this church of ours was built, he was the first to insist on a clause in its trust forbidding its members ever to require that any particular doctrine should or should not be taught. For he wished ministers and people alike to be for ever free to follow the free motions of the Spirit, and to believe and to say the thing that should seem to them to be the very truth of God.

Free was he, and would have all men so, in the solemn matters that lie between the soul and the Father of Spirits ; but he looked back across the ages and recognised in one who taught in Galilee nigh two thousand years ago, the fairest Soul, the faithfulest Child of God, who had ever looked forth from human eyes and spoken with human lips. His love of Jesus, his reverence, his loyalty, his allegiance, knew no bounds ; and was surely the more gracious that it was not strained, but was the free offering of a judgment independent and an affection caught and held by him to whom it was addressed. He saw how all that is best and truest in the religion of the Western peoples is drawn from the ministry of Christ, and how each of sixty generations has been historically affiliated to him. He felt in his love for him no bonds ; in his gratitude only the sacred stimulus to try to be like him and to reflect the Heavenly Father's love in his own affections. And while Plato and many another commanded the

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homage of his intellect, he had language of humblest discipleship to address to Jesus which was for no other under the blue skies in all the records of our race.

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